

Resolving the AMO Confusion:

Results of a qualitative study into HRM implementation by line managers



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Abstract

In this research, HRM implementation effectiveness of line managers is investigated using the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory. This research highlights the (inter)relationship between each of the AMO factors and the performance of line managers in effective HRM implementation. The AMO factors are operationalized based on the intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and perceived organizational support theory. These theories are used to explore how they can help us to better understand the relationship among the AMO factors and their effect on HRM implementation effectiveness. The goal of this study is to find out in what way the AMO factors are (inter)related with line managers' performance. This research seeks to make a theoretical contribution by applying the AMO model to better explain the role of line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity in shaping their overall HRM performance. We aim to create a new model to show the (inter)relationship between the AMO factors and line managers' performance in implementing HRM. Besides, this research seeks to make a practical contribution by offering insight for the HR department interested in enhancing the performance of line managers in implementing HRM. There are 22 in-depth interviews conducted in one organization; with line managers, employees, managing directors and the HR manager. The intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and organizational support theory turned out to be helpful for the operationalization of the AMO factors. However, it seems that there is some overlap between the constructs influencing the AMO factors. During the interviews it appeared that some constructs were influencing different AMO factors at the same time. The interviews have shown that the organizational support theory operationalizes line managers' opportunity differently than line managers did. The intellectual capital theory appeared to be very suitable for this study. The operationalization according to this theory appeared to be in accordance with the results of the interviews. The self-determination theory focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This theory turned out to be very helpful because it points out different types of motivation. The underlying idea is that the type of motivation is more important than the total amount of motivation for predicting outcomes such as effective performance.

1. Introduction

Effective HRM can help an organization to achieve competitive advantage and improve its performance. An important question is how organizations can maximize the effectiveness of HRM. Nehles, van Riemsdijk, Kok and Looise (2006) argue that the effectiveness of HRM depends on the quality of HR practices as well as the success of implementation. This means that even if the HR practices are effective, the HRM system might still not be effective because managers do not know how to implement the HR practices successfully. According to Klein and Sorra (1996) implementation is the process of gaining employees' appropriate and committed use of an innovation. We lend this understanding for the implementation of HRM practices. Therefore we understand that implementation effectiveness can be defined as the process of gaining employees' appropriate and committed use of a certain HR practice. Organizational analysts increasingly identify implementation failure as the cause of many organizations' inability to achieve the intended benefits from the HR practices they adopt. Therefore this research argues that the implementation effectiveness of HRM is essential for achieving performance.

Line managers are responsible for the operational output, as well as for the performance of their team. They have an important role in implementing HRM. According to Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson and Lawrence (2016) line managers must possess more knowledge of HRM processes, and the skills and capabilities required to effectively manage people. Line managers are considered a crucial factor in understanding the relationship between HRM and performance as they are the ones bringing the HR practices to life (Kellner et al., 2016). They are responsible for executing HR practices on the operational work floor, such as: handling sickness and disability cases, managing absenteeism, facilitating upward safety communication and conflict resolution (Kellner et al., 2016). This results in that line managers influence employees' perceptions about the HRM system in place as well as their attitudes, behaviour and performance. Some HR policies have a direct impact on employees. However, most rely on the line manager's action or support, and the quality of the relationship between employees and their manager (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). The variability in people management performance of line managers is clearly reflected in employees' views of their manager's leadership behaviour. In most workplaces, line managers – compared to middle and upper managers – are responsible for the largest cohort of employees and therefore they have a strong influence over how people management processes are conducted and the quality of HRM outcomes. This proves that the performance of line managers is of crucial importance for the effectiveness of HRM implementation.

AMO theory

The performance of line managers can be explained using the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2000). This theory is often used in HRM performance research. Usually this theory explains how certain HR practices influence individual performance outcomes. According to Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), the AMO theory predicts individual performance. First of all, individuals need the ability to do their tasks. Besides they need motivation for these tasks and the opportunity provided to carry out these tasks. In this research, however, the AMO theory is applied differently; it is assumed that the line manager's ability, motivation and opportunity influence their HRM performance. Kellner et al. (2016) argue that ability refers to the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the line managers to implement HRM. They state that poor HRM outcomes are mostly associated with the line manager's lack of ability to implement HRM. Besides, they also need the motivation and the opportunity to implement HRM in order to be effective. In this study, the AMO factors will be operationalized based on the intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and perceived organizational support theory. These theories are used to explore how they can help us to better understand the relationship among the AMO factors and their effect on HRM implementation effectiveness.

Problem statement

Nehles et al. (2006) suggest that there are five factors which are the main challenges line managers experience when implementing HRM. First, they must be willing to perform HR practices. Second, they need enough time to spend on these additional responsibilities. Third, they need sufficient competences to apply HR practices. Fourth, they need to feel supported by the HR department. And fifth, they have to be provided with clear policies and procedures for performing additional HR tasks. Bos-Nehles, van Riemsdijk and Looise (2013) as well as Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson and Lawrence (2016) have looked into these challenges, as these can influence the effectiveness of the entire HRM system. What is striking, however, is that although they have operationalized AMO similarly, these studies found different results.

Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) conducted quantitative research through a survey in two organizations, an international naval defence company and a national construction company. They found that ability significantly enhances HRM implementation effectiveness and therefore is the best predictor of line managers'

performance. They stated that motivation does not moderate the effect of ability on HRM implementation effectiveness, as predicted, and their results suggest that this effect needs some further research. They also stated that opportunity does enhance the effect of ability on HRM implementation effectiveness. Therefore, they argued that HRM departments should aim to enhance the line managers' abilities and provide adequate opportunities for them to carry out the expected HRM activities. In short, they proposed that ability directly affects the line manager's performance, while opportunity only moderates this effect. They stated that the formula resulting from applying the AMO theory is $P = fA(1+O)$. The model provided by Kellner et al. (2016) about the effects of ability and opportunity on line managers' performance is shown in figure 1.

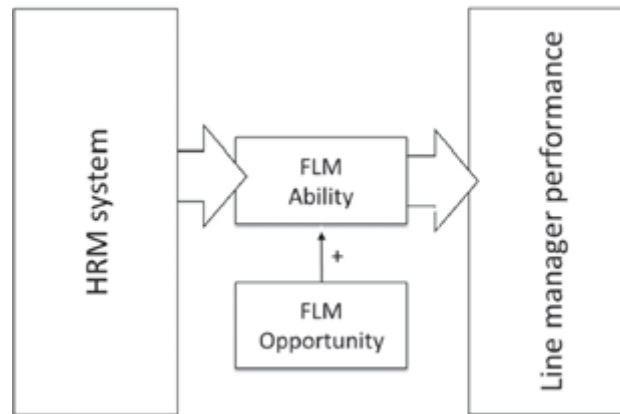


Figure 1: AMO effects on line manager HRM performance (Kellner et al., 2016)

On the other hand, Kellner et al. (2016) argued in their study that a more comprehensive model is needed to convey the reality. They conducted qualitative research in the Australian health-care industry and it appeared that the AMO relationships cannot be explained by an additive or multiplicative formula. They agree with Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) that ability must be present for line managers to perform HRM tasks because without the necessary knowledge and skills line managers are not able to implement HR practices effectively, even if they are motivated and have the opportunity to do so. In contrast to Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), they argue that motivation and opportunity both influence the relationship between ability and performance. Their model indicates that ability can influence motivation and that this relationship can be reversed. Low ability may reduce their motivation to perform HR tasks and a lack of motivation can make line managers less disposed to develop ability. Opportunity is a complex element because Kellner et al. (2016) believe that this variable consists of three elements: time, managerial support of the HR department, and HR policies and procedures. They add to this that even when two elements may be high, the third one may be restricted and can overshadow the other two elements. This means that even when there are clear policies and strong support, a lack of time can result in a negative influence separately on motivation, or on the relationship between ability and performance. They suggest that opportunity interacts with motivation, because when all elements of opportunity to perform HR tasks are low, the line manager's motivation will also be negatively affected. On the other hand, when all elements of opportunity are positive, motivation should increase and this creates a positive indirect effect on line managers' performance. The revised model about the effects of ability, motivation and opportunity on line managers' performance according to Kellner et al. (2016) is shown in figure 2.

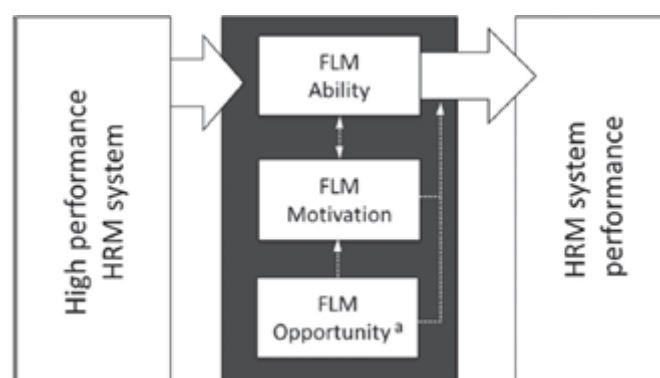


Figure 2: AMO effects on hospital FLM's HRM performance (Kellner et al., 2016)

Goal and research questions

The studies of Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) and Kellner et al. (2016) found different outcomes, which means that we still do not know which AMO factors actually influence line managers' performance and how they interrelate with each other. Another problem is that there is little theoretical basis for the operationalization of the AMO factors for line managers' performance. In both studies the AMO factors were operationalized according to the challenges described by Nehles et al. (2006). In this study, however, resources are borrowed from three different theories coming from sociology and psychology: the intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and perceived organizational support theory. These theories are used to broadly operationalize the AMO factors in order to study line managers' performance in implementing HRM. The intellectual capital theory is used to operationalize ability because it refers to the knowledge and knowing capability of an organization (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). In contrast to human capital, the roots of intellectual capital are deeply embedded in social relations and in the structure of these relationships (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This view contrasts with relatively individualistic perspectives that characterize a more transactional approach for explaining the existence and contribution of organizations. This theory is used because the differences between organizations (in terms of performance) may represent differences in their ability to develop intellectual capital. The self-determination theory is used to operationalize motivation. This theory is used because it is important for a motivational theory to differentiate types of motivation for predicting outcomes such as effective performance (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Therefore, the self-determination theory focuses on different types of motivation instead of treating motivation as a unitary concept, focussing on the overall amount of motivation that people have for particular activities. The perceived organizational support theory is used to operationalize opportunity. This theory describes how employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington & Sowa, 1986; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010). The roots of organizational support theory belong to the "social exchange theory" that refers that when employees feel that they are supported by their organization, they will reciprocate it with some valuable return. This is called the notion of "reciprocity"; when people feel that they are supported by the organization, they reciprocate with better performance and high work efforts.

This research will highlight the (inter)relationship between each of the AMO factors and the performance of line managers in effective HRM implementation. Therefore, the goal of this study is to find out in what way the AMO factors are (inter)related with line managers' performance. Thereafter, a new conceptual framework will be created to show the relationship between the AMO factors and line managers' performance in implementing HRM and the interrelationships between the AMO factors. To point out the role of the AMO factors in the effectiveness of FLMS in implementing HRM, the research question is as follows: *"Based on a theoretically-based operationalization of the AMO factors, in what way are line managers' ability, motivation, and opportunity related to their performance in implementing human resource practices effectively?"*

There are four sub-questions which must be answered in order to answer this research question:

1. In what way does ability predict the effectiveness of line managers in implementing HRM?
2. In what way does motivation predict the effectiveness of line managers in implementing HRM?
3. In what way does opportunity predict the effectiveness of line managers in implementing HRM?
4. What is the relationship between the different AMO factors?

This research seeks to make a theoretical contribution by applying the AMO model (Appelbaum et al., 2000) to better explain the role of line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity in shaping their overall HRM performance. The intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and perceived organizational support theory are used to explore how they can help us to better understand the relationship among the AMO factors and their effect on HRM implementation effectiveness. We aim to create a new model to show the (inter)relationship between the AMO factors and line managers' performance in implementing HRM. Besides, this research seeks to make a practical contribution by offering insight for the HR department interested in enhancing the performance of line managers in implementing HRM. It is important for the HR department to know how line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity are (inter)related to their performance and how they can enhance line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity in implementing HRM.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, HRM implementation effectiveness will be conceptualized in §2.1. Besides, this study borrows resources from the intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and perceived organizational support. Therefore, these studies and their effect on implementation effectiveness will be described in §2.2 till §2.4.

2.1 HRM implementation effectiveness

The effectiveness of HRM depends, as mentioned before, on the quality of HR practices as well as the success of implementation (Nehles, van Riemsdijk, Kok & Looise, 2006). This means that implementation effectiveness and HRM effectiveness are two different constructs. Even when the HR practices are effective, the HRM system might still not be effective if line managers do not know how to implement the HR practices successfully. Klein and Sorra (1996) argue that implementation is the process of gaining employees' appropriate and committed use of an innovation. As mentioned before, we lend this understanding for the implementation of HRM practices. Therefore we understand that implementation effectiveness can be defined as the process of gaining employees' appropriate use of a certain HR practice. Implementation effectiveness emphasizes the difficulty of HRM implementation; targeted employees' consistent and appropriate HRM use is not guaranteed, whereas HRM effectiveness emphasizes the different effects of HRM implementation. This research is focused on the implementation effectiveness of HRM and argues that effective implementation is essential for achieving performance. The failure to achieve the intended benefits of an HR practice may either reflect a failure of implementation or a failure of the HR practice itself. Organizational analysts identify implementation failure as the cause of many organizations' inability to achieve the intended benefits of the HR practices they adopt. Implementation is the transition period during which targeted employees ideally become increasingly skilful, consistent, and committed in their use of the HR practice. This means that the HR practice is effective when it is consistently and committedly used by employees. The targeted employees are the employees who are expected either to use the HR practice or to support the HR practice's use. Therefore implementation effectiveness will be conceptualized as (1) the quality of use and (2) the consistency of use of a certain HR practices.

2.2 Intellectual capital theory

The intellectual capital is used to operationalize line managers' ability in implementing HRM. This theory refers to the knowledge and knowing capability of an organization (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Kellner et al. (2016) argue that poor HRM outcomes are mostly associated with a line manager's lack of knowledge, skills and capabilities to implement HRM. In their study, they operationalized ability as the knowledge, skills and capabilities of line managers and therefore suggest that human capital is the key resource for line managers' ability to implement HRM. However, human capital is part of a bigger concept. Intellectual capital is the umbrella concept including human capital, social capital and organizational capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005; Stiles & Kulvisaechana, 2003). Central to the idea of intellectual capital is that both people and systems are important to perform well. This is the reason why the intellectual capital theory is used to explain line managers' performance in implementing HRM.

Aspects of intellectual capital

According to Subramaniam and Youndt (2005) intellectual capital is the sum of all knowledge companies utilize for competitive advantage. They state that there are three prominent aspects of intellectual capital: human capital, social capital and organizational capital. Human capital is defined as the knowledge, skills and capabilities of individuals. Stiles and Kulvisaechana (2003) argue that the emphasis on human capital matches with the emphasis in strategy research on 'core competences' attributed to people's skills. Nafukho, Hairston and Brooks (2004, p.547) describe several definitions of human capital according to different researchers. These definitions also demonstrate the factors - knowledge, skills and capabilities - which refer to human capital. Subramaniam and Youndt (2005) define organizational capital as the institutionalized knowledge and codified experience residing within and utilized through data-bases, manuals, structures, systems, and processes. The knowledge is distributed from organizational structures, processes, and systems. The role of organizational capital is to link the resources of the organization together. The difference between human capital and organizational capital is the most significant. That is, human capital is associated with individual expertise whereas organizational capital is associated with institutionalized knowledge (Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005). Human capital may or may not stay within the organization because individual expertise can change depending on the hiring, mobility, and turnover of employees. Conversely, institutionalized knowledge and thus organizational capital stays within the organization and does not change very easily (Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005). Social capital is defined as the knowledge embedded within and utilized by interactions among

individuals and their networks of interrelationships. According to Subramaniam and Youndt (2005) social capital tends to function more like organizational capital than human capital since social capital stems from norms for collaboration, interaction, and the sharing of ideas. Therefore it tends to be retained within organization irrespective of changes of individuals. Social capital is an example of a flexible network for sharing and the exchange of knowledge and therefore acts as a facilitator to strengthen how human capital and organizational capital are leveraged in organizations (Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005). Social relationships and social capital are an important influence on the development of both human and intellectual capital. This is something which has to be taken into account because this proves that line managers' human capital is not an isolated concept. Line managers with a better social capital and stronger contact networks will perform better than line managers with no strong contact networks.

2.3 Self-determination theory

There are also resources borrowed from the self-determination theory. This theory is used to operationalize line managers' motivation in implementing HRM. Deci and Ryan (2008) state that the self-determination theory is the first theory that points out different types of motivation. They argue that it is important to differentiate different types of motivation because research has shown that, whereas autonomous motivation facilitates effective performance and well-being, controlled motivation can detract from those outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2005). The underlying idea is that the type of motivation is more important than the total amount of motivation for predicting outcomes such as effective performance. Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that people who are intrinsically motivated have more interest, excitement, and confidence, and therefore have enhanced performance and general well-being than people who are extrinsically motivated. The contrast between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation is known by most people. Gagné and Deci (2005, p.331) define intrinsic motivation as "the involvement of people doing something because they find it interesting and derive spontaneous satisfaction from the activity itself". On the other hand, they state that (2005, p.331) "extrinsic motivation requires an instrumentality between the activity and consequences such as tangible or verbal rewards, thus satisfaction comes not from the activity itself but rather from the extrinsic consequences to which the activity leads".

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsically motivated behaviour is prototypically autonomous and self-determined. However, Ryan and Deci (2000) state that despite the fact that humans have intrinsic motivational tendencies, the maintenance and enhancement of this inherent tendency requires some supportive conditions such as approval or rewards. This means that the theory about intrinsic motivation is not about the causes of intrinsic motivation, but it rather examines the conditions that provoke and sustain, versus restrain and reduce this intrinsic motivation. It is important to note that line managers will only be intrinsically motivated for activities they are intrinsically interested in. Activities which line managers are not intrinsically interested in will not be seen as novel, challenging and motivated to start with. To understand the motivation for those activities, there must be more deeply looked into the nature of extrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation

When behaviour is initiated and maintained by contingencies external to the person, this is called extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is a prototype of controlled motivation, because activities are not interesting (i.e. line managers are not intrinsically motivated) and therefore require extrinsic motivation which depends on a desired consequence such as approval or rewards. Gagné and Deci (2005) suggest that an important characteristic of self-determination theory is that it postulates a controlled-to-autonomous continuum to describe the degree to which an external regulation has been internalized. In 1985, Deci and Ryan introduced the organismic integration theory to show the different forms of extrinsic motivation and the factors that promote or hinder internalization. Internalization refers to three different processes: introjection, identification, and integration. The organismic integration theory of motivational types is shown in figure 3.

Left of the continuum stands amotivation. Amotivation is the state of lacking the intention to act. The lack of intention results from not valuing an activity, not feeling competent to do it, or not expecting it to yield the desired outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). To the right of amotivation there are different classifications of motivated behaviour. Although many researchers treat motivation as a unitary concept, each of the categories identified within the organismic integration theory describes different types of motivation. At the far right of the continuum is intrinsic motivation. As stated before, this type of motivation is the prototype of self-determination. Extrinsically motivated behaviours cover the four middle types of motivation, varying in the extent to which their regulation is controlled versus autonomous. Externally regulated behaviour is the most

controlled extrinsically behaviour. According to Ryan and Deci (2000) this kind of behaviour performs only to satisfy the external demand or reward contingency. Gagné and Deci (2005) describe introjected regulation as a regulation that has been taken in by a person but has not been accepted as his or her own. This type of regulation controls the person. An example of introjected regulation is when people feel a pressure to behave in order to feel worthy. The regulation comes from within the person but it is a controlled form of extrinsic motivation (e.g. line managers implement HRM because this makes that they feel like a worthy person). With identified regulation, people identify with the value of behaviour for their own self-selected goals. They feel greater freedom and autonomy because the behaviour is more compatible with their own personal goals and identity (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Integrated regulation is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. The extrinsic motivation is truly autonomous and people feel that their behaviour is an integral part of who they are so their behaviour is self-determined. This type of regulation represents the most developmentally advanced form of extrinsic motivation. However, note that it never becomes intrinsic motivation because the motivation is characterised not by inherent enjoyment and interest but rather by the activity being instrumentally important for their personal goals (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The process of internalizing regulations may occur in stages, however, according to Ryan and Deci (2000) it is not a developmental continuum in the sense that people progress through stages of internalization.

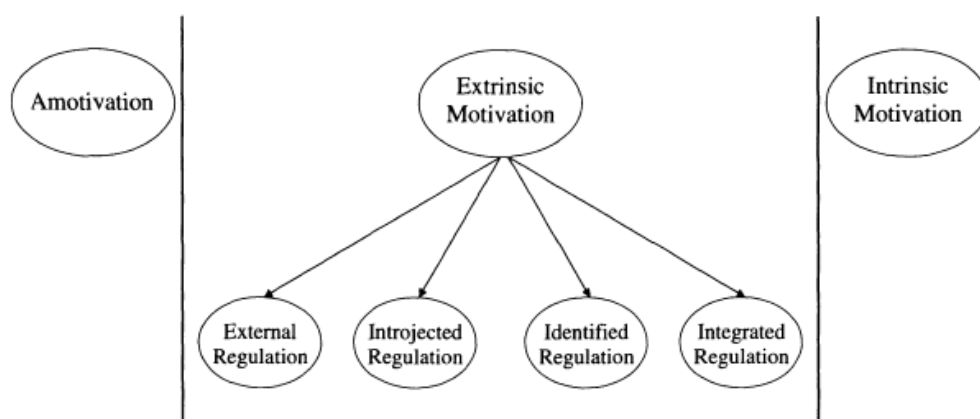


Figure 3: The self-determination continuum (Gagné & Deci, 2005)

According to Gagné and Deci (2005) the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs enhances intrinsic motivation and internalization (i.e. competence, autonomy and relatedness). They define these needs as “universal necessities, as the nutriments that are essential for optimal human development and integrity” (2005, p.337). The needs for competence and autonomy underlie intrinsic motivation. According to self-determination theory, people need to feel competent and autonomous to maintain their intrinsic motivation. In addition, the third basic need - the need for relatedness - is also crucial for internalization. Relatedness refers to the need to feel belongingness and connectedness with others. Using the definition of universal necessities according to Gagné and Deci (2005), it seems that the needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are crucial for all individuals. This means that the self-determination theory focuses on consequences of the extent to which individuals are able to satisfy these needs. Specifying psychological needs as essential nutriments implies that individuals cannot without one of these needs nutriments. So, for example, an organization that affords autonomy but fails to foster relatedness is expected to reduce a line manager’s intrinsic motivation. With respect to this research, Gagné and Deci (2005) argue that organizations that promote satisfaction of the basic psychological needs (i.e. competence, autonomy and relatedness) will enhance line managers’ intrinsic motivation and internalization and this results into effective performance.

2.4 Perceived organizational support

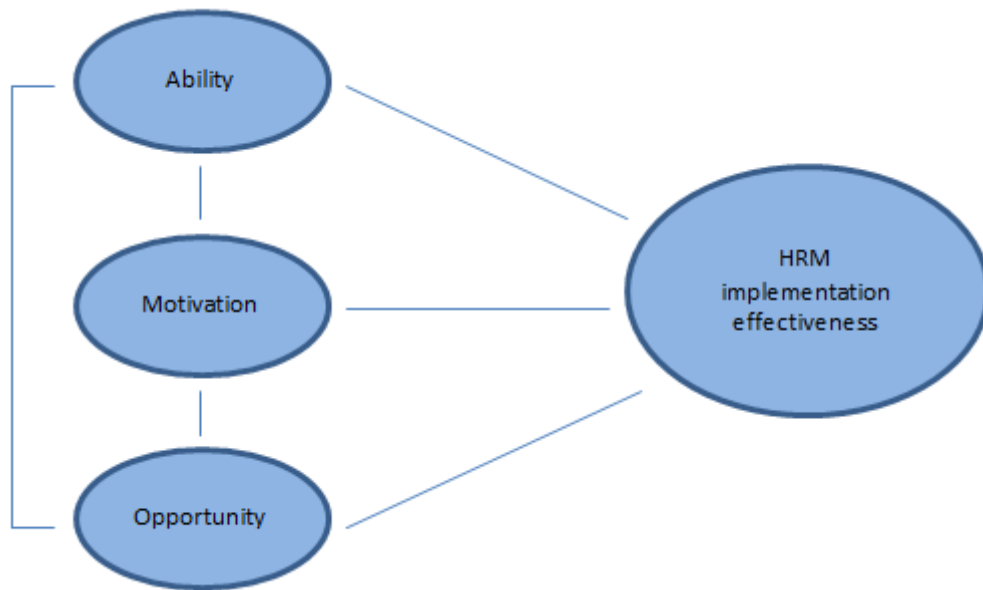
Finally, resources are borrowed from the organizational support theory in order to operationalize line managers' opportunity in implementing HRM. This theory is usually used to describe how employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington & Sowa, 1986; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010). In this research, however, the focus is on how line managers perceive organizational support in order to implement HRM effectively.

The organizational support theory suggests that the development of perceived organizational support is encouraged by employees' tendency to assign humanlike characteristics to the organization. The actions taken by the HR department and management team are often viewed as indications of the organization's intent rather than attributed only to their personal motives (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2006). On the basis of the organization's personification, line managers view the favourable or unfavourable treatment as an indication that the organization favours or disfavours them. Organizational support has to do with commitment line managers have to the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). Hutchison and Sowa (1986, p.500) describe organizational commitment as an "employee's identification with and involvement in a particular organization". Identification means the employee's sense of unity with the organization. Such affective attachment has been found to influence the performance of line managers (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When line managers perceive that the reward they get from the organization is valuable and meets their expectations, they reciprocate with good efforts and performance. This means that it can be inferred that there is an exchange relationship between the organization and line managers (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Line managers perform well to reciprocate the organization and they are paid by the organization to respond for their performance. Social exchange theorists argue that resources received from others are more highly valued if these are based on choice rather than reasons and circumstances beyond the donor's control. Such voluntary help is seen as an indication that the donor values and respects the line managers (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Because the HR department and management team act as organizational agents, line manager's receipt of favourable treatment from their supervisor should contribute to the perceived organizational support. The strength of this relationship depends on the degree to which line managers identify their supervisor with the organization.

Eisenberger et al. (1986, p.501) define perceived organizational support as "employees' perception that the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being". Ahmed, Ismail, Amin and Ramzan (2011, p.784) add to this that perceived organizational support also refers to "the degree to which they believe that the organization provides them with help and support to implement HRM". Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) agree with this and they state that perceived organizational support is also valued as assurance that help will be available from the organization when it is needed to carry out their job effectively and to deal with stressful situations. To summarize, there are three factors - perception that the organization values their contributions, the perception that the organization cares about their well-being and the perception that the organization provides them help and support to implement HRM - which influence the perceived organizational support to implement HRM effectively. Stinglhamber and Van den Berghe (2003) suggest that based on the reciprocity norm, high perceived organizational support would strengthen affective commitment to the organization through three specific mechanisms. First, perceived organizational support would generate an obligation to contribute to the organization's well-being and help the organization to reach its goals. This means that line managers will repay the organization through greater affective commitment and increased performance. Second, perceived organizational support would increase affective commitment by fulfilling socio-emotional needs as need for self-esteem, approval, and affiliation. These socio-emotional needs may lead to line managers become affectively tied to the organization. Third, perceived organizational support would generate experiences contributing to line managers' comfort and perceived competence, that is, feelings of being supported and valued by the organization would result in positive mood.

2.5 Research framework

Hereunder, a framework is provided about the possible effects of the AMO factors on HRM implementation effectiveness and the correlations between the AMO factors that are going to be investigated in this study.



3. Methods

3.1 Operationalization of the AMO factors

To point out the role of the AMO factors in the effectiveness of HRM implementation, the research question is stated as follows: *“Based on a theoretically-based operationalization of the AMO factors, in what way are line managers’ ability, motivation, and opportunity related to their performance in implementing human resource practices effectively?”* This study borrows resources from the intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and perceived organizational support concerning line managers’ performance. The operationalization of these theories can be found in figure 4 till 6. These theories are used to operationalize the AMO factors. In this research we used resources of the intellectual capital theory to operationalize ability. Besides, resources of the self-determination theory are used to operationalize motivation and resources of the perceived organizational support theory are used to operationalize opportunity.

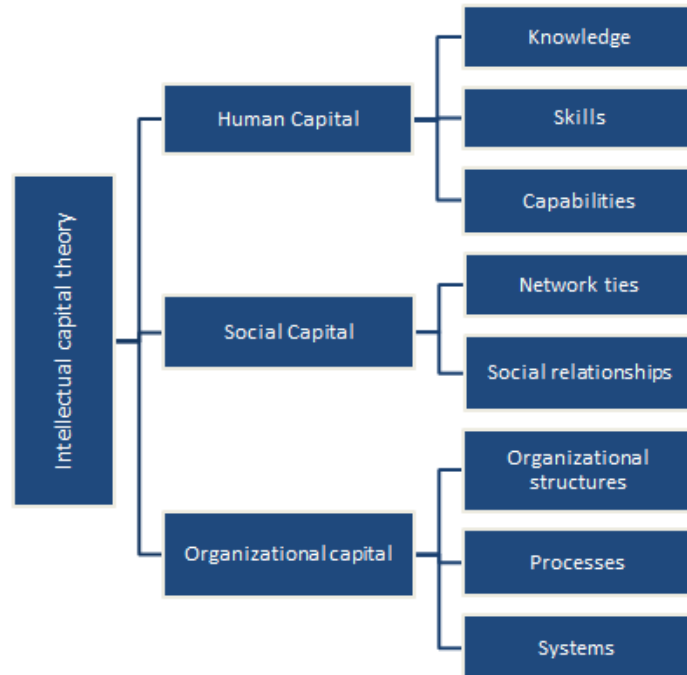


Figure 4: Operationalization of the intellectual capital theory (ability)

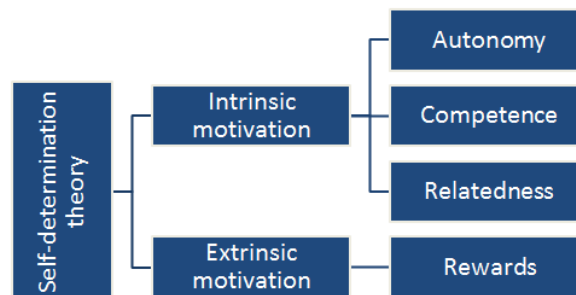


Figure 5: Operationalization of the self-determination theory (motivation)

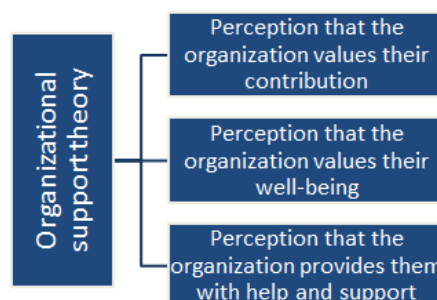


Figure 6: Operationalization of the organizational support theory (opportunities)

3.2 Research type

There has already been done some research about the relationship between the AMO factors and the effectiveness of line managers' HRM implementation. Therefore in this study we need detailed insights from individual participants in order to investigate the performance of line managers further. In-depth interviews are used to provide a deeper understanding of the perceptions about line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity to implement HRM. For these interviews, semi-structured interview questions are used, which can be found in appendix I till III. These kind of semi-structured questions are used because the purpose of the interviews is to find out which concepts line managers appoint as important concerning their ability, motivation and opportunity to implement HRM. Questions are asked about what they perceive as important factors for their ability, motivation and opportunity to effectively implement HRM. Most of the interviews are conducted face-to-face. There is one interview which is conducted through the telephone because this employee works in the field. In qualitative research, in this case face-to-face interviews, the researcher's use of self is a primary tool for data collection. Therefore, it is important that the procedures are clearly described to ensure that the data is recorded accurately and that the data obtained is representative of the 'whole' picture (Law, Stewart, Letts, Pollock, Bosch, & Westmorland, 1998).

The interviews are conducted in one single organization, which results in that this research is a single case study. The laboratory industry is examined during this research. The company under study provides customers with high quality laboratory and advisory services to contribute to global health and safety. The company wants to be a decentralized non-bureaucratic fast moving group of entrepreneur led businesses. There are different locations where the laboratories are settled. In this research, three locations will be investigated, namely: Heerenveen, Deventer and Barendrecht. Each location has one leader; an empowered and accountable managing director who sets the strategy for his or her business. Thereunder there are several line managers who are responsible for the operational output as well as for the performance of their team. They are empowered and need to create or influence an environment in which employees perform, grow, contribute and enjoy. The HR function is decentralized. Consequently, managers and direct supervisors are responsible for the implementation of HRM. The line managers are responsible for their team when it comes to the implementation of HR practices. Employees need to be motivated and to perform well and this is the responsibility of their managers. Management studies and organizational theory rely heavily upon case studies as a form of data collection. Single-case studies are best suited to consider how and why questions, while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that case studies are an excellent opportunity to gain insight into a case and to gather data from a variety of sources. This proves that a single-case study is the best suited research type to find out how line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity relate to their performance in implementing HRM effectively.

3.2 Population and data collection

The laboratory industry is examined during the field research. In this research, the focus is on chemistry and micro-biology of food. In the laboratory industry line managers mostly possess intricate technical capability and operational knowledge which allows them to relate closely to employees' work. Kellner et al. (2016) state that this ability often comes by moving through ranks which results in that these employees got promoted to a position of associated managerial responsibilities. Kellner et al. (2016) argue, however, that these employees do not have the managerial abilities to implement HRM effectively. This research shows whether this is true or not. Semi-structured interviews are conducted in order to collect data about line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity in implementing HRM.

3.2.1 Sampling strategy

For the independent variables (i.e., line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity to perform HRM), the population consists of six line managers with day-to-day supervisory responsibility. These line managers are interviewed in order to find out in what way their ability, motivation and opportunity is related to their performance in implementing HRM. They are asked about what they perceive as important concepts in order to have the ability, motivation and opportunity to implement HRM effectively. Besides, two employees per line manager are interviewed about their perception of their manager's ability, motivation and opportunity in implementing HRM. The managing director of each location is also interviewed about what they perceive as important concepts for line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity to effectively implement HRM. Besides, it is important to make clear how the managing director co-operates with the line managers and how they support line managers in their HR role. There is chosen to interview line managers as well as employees and managing directors. This results in that the data will be more reliable and objective because different

respondents are interviewed about the same concepts. Because of the limited time for field research it is important to keep in mind that there is no time to conduct too many interviews. That is the reason why only the managing directors, six line managers and two employees per line manager are interviewed. The HR-manager is interviewed about what the HR department does to ensure a certain level of ability, motivation and opportunity for line manager to implement HRM. In total there are conducted 22 interviews. An overview of the different respondents and locations can be found in table 1.

	Heerenveen
1 Managing director	Managing director
2 Line manager	BU Manager Chemistry
3 Employee	Laboratory
4 Employee	Laboratory
5 Line manager	BU Manager Microbiology
6 Employee	Laboratory
7 Employee	Laboratory
	Deventer
Managing director	Managing director
8 Line manager	Manager Operations
9 Employee	Operations
10 Employee	Operations
11 Line manager	Manager Advice
12 Employee	Advice
13 Employee	Advice
14 Managing director	Managing director
	Barendrecht
15 Line manager	Lab Manager
16 Employee	Laboratory
17 Employee	Laboratory
18 Line manager	Customer Service Manager
19 Employee	Customer Service
20 Employee	Customer Service
21 Managing director	Managing director
HR department	Nationwide
22 HR-manager	HR Manager

Table 1: An overview of the different respondents and locations

For measuring the dependent variable (i.e. line manager's HRM implementation effectiveness), two employees per line manager and the managing director are asked about their perception about the line manager's performance in implementing HRM. As proposed in this research, HRM implementation effectiveness can be defined as the process of gaining employees' appropriate use of a certain HR practice. Therefore, employees are asked about their satisfaction in regarding the way their line manager carried out HRM activities. Thus, the perceptions about the line managers' ability motivation and opportunity were measured at the line managers and employees' level and the HRM implementation effectiveness is measured only at employees' level. In addition, the managing directors and HR-manager are interviewed in order to identify the HR policy concerning the HRM responsibilities of line managers.

3.2.2 Reliability of interviews

Achieving reliability using interviews is challenging because each interview is unique in some way. Because of the use of semi-structured interview questions, there can be a variation in the data because different questions can be asked and data can be interpreted differently. This is due to the interactive nature of interviews. Therefore it is important to make sure that the interview process is as structured as possible. To make sure that the data is reliable, there is chosen to interview line managers as well as employees and managing directors.

This results in that the data is more objective because different respondents are interviewed about the same concepts.

3.3 Data analysis

The interviews are voice recorded and thereafter transcribed because transcription makes it easier to analyze a text. When the interviews were fully transcribed, they were imported and analyzed in Atlas ti. During the analysis of the transcribed interviews, the underlying concepts (codes) are found due to open coding. The open codes were developed on the basis of concepts line managers appointed as important concerning their ability, motivation and opportunity to implement HRM. Besides, the operationalization of the different theories (intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and organizational support theory) used in this research are used as a basis for the codes. The purpose of coding is to break down and understand the interviews and develop codes to better analyze the text. In table 2 there is information provided about the developed open codes and code groups. These codes will be further explained in the results.

Codes	Code groups
Knowledge about processes in the laboratory	Ability
Knowledge about HR (processes)	Ability
Management experience	Ability
Manuals and guidelines (organizational capital)	Ability
Skills (leadership skills)	Ability
Networking with other departments/colleagues	Ability
Training	Ability
Trust	Ability
Autonomy	Motivation
Need to feel competent	Motivation
Time	Motivation
Relatedness	Motivation
Appreciation	Motivation
Rewards	Motivation
Help and support	Motivation
HR department at location	Opportunity
Information support	Opportunity
Managerial support	Opportunity
Policies and procedures	Opportunity
Support HR department	Opportunity
Systems	Opportunity
Workload/Time	Opportunity

Table 2: Codes and code groups

The use of interviews based on perceptions of line managers and employees present some drawbacks. Asking line managers and employees about their perceptions about ability, motivation and opportunity can result in biased answers because their answers could be influenced by social desirability. Besides that, some answers may be over-estimated (individuals who rate themselves well) while others may be under-estimated (individuals who rate themselves bad). This is something which has to be taken into account during the analysis. According to Nehles et al. (2006) it is also important to take the company's characteristics into account in order to understand the results. Examples of characteristics are the classification of line manager's task complexities and their educational level. One important characteristic of the company which needs to be taken into account is the fact that the organization under study grows with 30% per year. This means that there are constant changes when it comes to HR responsibilities and operational tasks. The main limitation of a single-case study is the fact that data is only gathered from one organization. This limits the generalizability of the findings. To measure line managers' performance in implementing HRM, questions are asked about the perception of their ability, motivation and opportunity to implement HRM. Using perceptions gives the opportunity to investigate how line managers consider their HR role, which challenges they go through managing their team, and what experiences they have with executing HR practices.

4. Results

In this chapter the data of the interviews is analyzed on the basis of the operationalization in section 3.1.

4.1 Ability

Human capital

First of all it stands out that there is a big difference in the knowledge, skills and capabilities between line managers. This difference has mainly to do with management *experience* of managers. Older managers have more experience and generally have more knowledge and skills about how to implement HRM and handle in cases like for example long-term absenteeism. In contrast, younger managers do not have that experience just for the simple reason that they have never passed through certain cases before. Besides, it may be hard for them to manage employees who are older than they are.

"I am a manager for 15 years now and I notice that now it is a lot easier. In the beginning it was hard for me to manage people, because I was very young and the people I had to manage were a lot older than I was. As you grow older and when you get more experience, it becomes a lot easier. Now I learned to estimate how people react. These are things I learned through experience and I do not know if you can learn that by training. I think that is just life experience." Manager, Location C

"When you have a job interview with a candidate, you need to ask the right questions to find out whether this person is suitable for the job or not. This is something you learn from experience".

Manager, Location A

"The basic condition to be successful as a manager is to know what you are up to and that you have experience with it. It is important that you can oversee people, but also the processes to make the right decisions."

Manager, Location A

These quotes illustrate that line managers appoint experience as an important construct of their ability to effectively manage people. Line managers mentioned that in order to implement HRM, they need to have *knowledge about working conditions, absenteeism and basic knowledge about laws and regulations*. Most importantly they need to recognize the importance of their HR role. They do not need to be experts in HRM, but they need to recognize the processes so that they can ask for help and support at the right time. The following quote illustrates this:

"As a manager you do not need to be an expert when it comes to HRM. It is important that you recognize a certain process so that you ask for support at the right time when you feel that you do not have enough knowledge about it. As a manager you need the managerial competences to recognize these processes".

Managing Director, Location C

Knowledge about business processes such as the processes in the laboratory are also seen as important knowledge. The following quote illustrates this:

"In my opinion it happens too often that executives are selected only on management skills. It is not assessed whether they have relevant work experience. When you are manager of a microbiological laboratory, it is important that you know something about microbiology. When you do not have that knowledge, your team will not take you serious." Manager, Location A

The interviewees argued that managers need to know the processes at the laboratory, but only to a certain extent because operational tasks are the responsibility of the employees and the manager only facilitates the team. A lack of knowledge and skills is perceived as most disturbing at location B. Here the manager of the lab considers her HR competencies as insufficient to perform HR activities effectively. What also plays a role is that the HR department is not located at this location and thus there is no easy contact with the HR department to ask questions. Almost all interviewees indicate that both management experience and training are necessary to develop the right competencies. Those line managers that refer to a lack of training as a cause primarily perceive themselves as lacking particular leadership skills like for example conversational skills. They think that these skills could be developed through appropriate training courses. Some managers recognize a lack of sufficient and adequate training courses for certain HRM issues. Therefore they argued that they need

continuous and systematic training in HRM practices. The line managers argued that *leadership skills* such as conversational skills, listening skills, human knowledge and taking responsibility are seen as important skills for line managers to effectively manage people.

"Line managers need more training. I notice that line managers at this location especially need more training in conversational skills ... At this location we have a line manager that studied chemistry and she has no idea how to conduct a conversation with employees. I expect from the HR department that they offer trainings so that this could be done in an unambiguous manner. Now the managers are 'released' and I am the one who needs to help the line manager preparing a conversation with employees".

Managing Director, Location B

"In this company it works as follows: You have to do it with the knowledge and skills you have when you come here. With that knowledge and skills you are successful or not. It is not that you come here and you get several trainings to become a good manager. No, it depends on the knowledge and skills you have when you come here. When you need help or something, you need to make that clear, otherwise you would not get any help".

Manager, Location A

Social capital

Social relationships and networking seems to have an important influence on the development of human capital. Within the company, there is a high-potential policy for managers who want to grow into an executive function and for example want to become a business unit (BU) manager. The company uses this high-potential program to introduce social relationships and networking. The international trainings have one particular leadership subject at a time and this program is seen as a valuable opportunity to share information with other colleagues and learn new things. Therefore the high-potential program is related to line managers' ability to implement HRM effectively. The networking and exchange of information is appreciated by line managers and they argue that they are interested in more social meetings with colleagues to share information and to learn from each other.

"I had a couple of trainings, like 'Leadership Training'. Those kind of networking with people from the same functions are really good to exchange information. ... It was interesting to discuss topics like that and not just about business. For example: What are the difficulties related to the management and leading role? And when employees of your team are not motivated, how do you get them motivated? It would be nice to have a network with for example other departments to know what their problems are and to have an exchange meeting so that we can learn from each other." Manager, Location B

"Within the company this is arranged very well. The company is a multinational and I join the so-called 'best practice' groups. We take over these 'best practices' to laboratories with similar customers and similar analyses. With other colleagues you go have a look at other laboratories abroad to see how they handle certain situations and what their challenges are. Thereafter you make a list of these 'best practices' and think about how these practices could work out for this location. Personally I think that this is a valuable opportunity to share information between different entities of the organization."

Manager, Location A

The respondents argue that besides networking relationships, line managers also need *trust* from upper management in order to perform well. This trust refers to the assets created through relationships and bonds. The feeling of being trusted by upper management and their team helps line managers to implement HRM. The following quote illustrates this:

"It is important to let managers in their role and not to take over their responsibilities. They need competences and trust. When you want a manager to do something for you than (1) you need to make that clear and (2) you need to let that manager take the decision because they have the power to decide. When you interfere as a managing director, you undermine the position of the manager and that is something you have to avoid."

Managing Director, Location A

Organizational capital

There is some ambiguity when it comes to institutionalized knowledge like manuals, guidelines and processes. In the laboratory it is important that every analysis is done in accordance with strict protocols. That is the reason why there are a lot of rules and protocols in the laboratory. However, when it comes to HR, line managers argue that there are barely manuals or protocols available that explain how to perform certain HR activities.

"It would be nice to have more manuals and procedures where information can be found when I do not know what to do as a manager. Especially when I was new here, I did not know what to do when an employee was sick. Eventually I knew what to do, but in this organization you really need to find that out by yourself. It would be nice if this information was captured so that managers could look it up when they do not know how to do things." Manager, Location C

"There are some manuals and guidelines, but these are mainly administrative. This means that we use the same forms for certain things ... Our company is always growing and in development, which results in that there is hardly time to improve the foundation of the company and to construct manuals that are in line with the reality." Managing Director, Location C

"Within the company we have an intranet page, but this is more a kind of page with some documents on it. It is not user friendly and the information on it is outdated. When I just worked here I was going through all these documents and started reading. But on a certain moment I thought: What am I supposed to do with this information? When I asked other colleagues they told me that the information was 10 years old. Why is that information still on the intranet page?" Manager, Location A

On the other hand, the HR manager argued that there is a lot of institutionalized knowledge. He stated that there are a lot of forms and procedures that explain how managers need to do certain things like for example hire new employees. The following quote illustrates this:

"When it comes to HR, there are a lot of forms and manuals that managers can use. We simplified the employment conditions. This regulation is reduced from 88 to 20 pages. Besides there is an intranet with an HR-page where a lot of information can be found. There are a lot of forms that describe which steps managers need to take when it comes to hiring new employees and things like that. Sometimes I think that we have too many forms". HR Manager

This shows that there is a gap when it comes to organizational capital. On the one hand, line managers do not know that there are forms, guidelines and manuals which explain how to do things. And when they know that certain information is available, they do not know where to find this information. On the other hand, the HR manager argued that there is a lot of institutionalized knowledge managers can use when they want to know what to do.

The importance of line managers' ability

All interviewees agreed that a line manager's ability is important for their effectiveness in HRM implementation. It depends on the location and your team what kind of knowledge and skills are mainly important. For managing the laboratory, it is important to know the processes and analysis in the laboratory whereas this knowledge will be less valuable for a manager of customer service.

"Knowledge and skills are very important for the effectivity of a manager. I think these factors are essential. It is important to have sufficient knowledge so that your team will take you serious and they have the feeling that they can come to you to have questions." Employee, Location B

"Knowledge and skills are a basic condition to perform well as a manager ... When you do not have enough knowledge, your success rate will be very low." Manager, Location A

Summarizing the findings about line managers' ability

It seems that line managers need three different capitals to implement HRM practices effectively. First of all they need human capital in terms of experience, operational knowledge, knowledge about HR processes and leadership skills. Human capital requires training and development of line managers. Besides they need social capital in terms of relationships, networking and trust. Social capital and networking seems to have an influence on the development of human capital and requires the development of norms that facilitate interactions, relationships and collaboration. Finally line managers need organizational capital like manuals, guidelines and processes in order to implement HRM effectively. There is some ambiguity when it comes to institutionalized knowledge because line managers argue that there are barely any manuals and forms whereas the HR-manager states that there are a lot of forms and manuals available. Organizational capital requires the establishment of knowledge storage devices so that managers can look up the information they need.

4.2 Motivation

In this chapter it will be outlined what line managers perceive as important factors influencing their motivation in implementing HRM. Besides it will be discussed what type of motivation line managers have in implementing HRM and what observable (motivational) behaviour they show. First of all, it stands out that line managers did not question the fact that they are the ones responsible for implementing HRM. Not one of the interviewed line managers showed reluctance to perform HR activities. All line managers see the importance and added value in applying HR practices or like this aspect of their responsibilities. They like the interaction with their team and being a part of their development.

"Managers are particularly evaluated on the basis of pre-set goals such as efficiency of analysis and costs, and which things they have to improve." Managing Director, Location A

This comment illustrates that when it comes to institutional incentives, line managers' HR role is often not included in their performance objectives. They are mostly evaluated on achieving targets related to profits or sales and not in areas related to managing people. However, line managers do take people management seriously and argue that their team is their most important asset. The following quotes illustrate this:

"I like my HR responsibilities. What I like the most is seeing development within my team ... I like giving employees the opportunity to develop themselves and being a part of that." Manager, Location A

"I think it is hard to indicate the difference between managing responsibilities and HR responsibilities. HR is always a part of your job as a manager. When you are not interested in people management, than you are not suitable for a management function in my opinion." Managing Director, Location C

"The HR responsibilities are a part of my function. As a manager I have the most knowledge about my team. It would be strange if someone from the HR department would do the performance interviews with my employees. I think that I should be responsible for that as their manager". Manager, Location C

These quotes show that line managers are intrinsically motivated to perform HRM. Moreover they argue that they themselves are the ones who work most closely with their team and therefore they are the ones responsible for HR issues in their team. They all agreed that they as line managers have the most knowledge about their team and thus they are the ones who should do the appraisal and performance interviews, as well as the job interviews with new employees. Administrative tasks like the registration of absenteeism and approval of the hours employees worked are seen as tasks managers do not like about their HR function. This is mostly associated with time consuming IT systems or the fact that they are very busy with other HR related issues. For these tasks, line managers are extrinsically motivated. They perform these tasks because they have to, but they do not like it. The following quotes illustrate this:

"I would like my HR responsibilities more when the administrative tasks were not that time consuming. When an employee is sick, I have to report this in 'Verzuimsignaal'. This system is not user friendly and it costs a lot of time to enter everything in the system." Manager, Location A

"The administrative tasks I would like to assign to the HR department like the registration of employees who are sick. There are two systems where I have to register employees when they are sick: 'Timewize' and 'Verzuimsignaal'. As a manager you need to know how the systems work and how to register the sick employee into the systems and this costs a lot of time". Manager, Location C

Because of the short-term pressure to perform well at operational level, it was expected that line managers had a priority for business issues instead of HR issues. However, they do not prioritize one above the other and think that they are equally important. Although, sometimes they prioritize business issues when they have to, but they all argued that they would nevertheless always perform HR activities at a later point in time. This means that line managers sometimes prepare appraisal talks at home. The approval of hours employees have worked is also an HR activity which is sometimes done in the evening at home or the next day at the office. This means that despite the fact that line managers are very busy with operational issues, they keep being motivated and show motivated behaviour to perform HR activities. Line managers agree that the people in their team are very important because they affect business issues in the long run. This proves that short-term business issues might result in postponing HR activities but not in cancelling them, as most line managers perceive the performance of HR activities to be valuable for the business.

Autonomy

Line managers mentioned autonomy as an important concept influencing their motivation in implementing HRM. Line managers at all three locations argued to have a lot of autonomy when it comes to managing their team, which enhances their intrinsic motivation to perform HRM. There are only a few procedures and protocols when it comes to HRM. As long as the operational goals are achieved, line managers are free in what to do and how to compose their team. The following quotes illustrate this:

"I am responsible for whom I hire here at the office and in the field ... Mostly I do this in consultation with my managing director because he has a lot more experience than I have. But in principle I have the authority to do that by myself." Manager, Location C

"There is no written HR policy within this organization. However, not that I know of ... I think it is important to have autonomy and do things the way I want. Within our organization that is possible. Of course there are rules that I have to keep, but there is room to do things the way I want and that is what is important for me".
Manager, Location A

"When there is hired a new head of department (the direct layer under the line manager), than I would like to see that person too. The contracts and other issues are the responsibility of the HR department, but the line managers are responsible for the application procedure themselves. They are responsible for who they hire in their team. Only things that are different from the standard work package when it comes to salary and secondary employment conditions must be adjusted with me as a managing director."
Managing Director, Location A

Competences

Line manager appointed that they need to feel competent in order to get motivated to perform HR activities. The interviewees argued that when line managers feel that they are competent to perform certain HR activities, they will be more motivated to perform HRM. The following quotes illustrate this:

"When you have the competences to implement changes within an organization and you see that this is effective, you will get extra motivated. However, when it is the other way around and a manager does not have knowledge and skills which results in that changes are poorly implemented, I would not get motivated to implement HRM." Manager, Location A

"I think that the line managers will like their HR responsibilities more when they feel that they have enough competences to perform HR activities well. So it will help to offer trainings to raise their knowledge level."
Managing Director, Location B

Time

Line managers appointed that in order to keep being motivated, they need support by means of easy to use systems and a clear overview of their HR responsibilities. In other words, their HR tasks should not cost unnecessary time.

"I would like my HR responsibilities more when they would be easier to perform. Now I constantly need to send e-mails to the HR department when I want to know something so they can look it up for me. I am not going to call or e-mail the HR department every week when I want to know something what is in the personnel files of employees. When I have my own system, I can make notes and save them in my own system. This would be less time consuming". Manager, Location C

"I would be more motivated to perform HR activities when I would have the proper tools to do so. I am supposed to manage the laboratory and make sure that we are able to analyze the samples on time. Therefore, I need a proper definition of who does what and thus for which things the HR department is responsible and for which things I am responsible so that I do not constantly need to ask". Manager, Location B

These quotes show that for line managers it is important that their HR tasks should be made as easy as possible and not get extra time. It is logical that their HR responsibilities will cost extra time besides their operational responsibilities and line managers do not have a problem with that. However, they state that it is important that these HR related tasks should be made as easy as possible for them to perform. So their responsibilities need to be clear so that they do not need to contact the HR department constantly. Besides, the systems need to be user friendly so that it will not cost extra time to figure out how it works.

Appreciation

Besides, it seems to be important that line managers need to feel appreciated by the organization. Especially employees argued that their manager has an overload of tasks and that the organization needs to appreciate them more. Particularly employees mentioned that line managers, as well as themselves will get more motivated when they feel that the organization cares about their well-being and appreciates them. The following quotes illustrate this:

"Everything inside the company needs to be faster and more efficient. The appreciation is missing while this is so important. And then I am not talking about an increase in salary, but just that somebody tells you that you are doing well. Personal attention is very important for employees as well as for managers. When they feel appreciated and that the organization cares about them, they will be more motivated to do their job".

Employee, Location C

"I think that my manager has too many tasks and that is the reason why it is hard for her. Besides I think that the organization can improve in caring about the well-being from employees and managers. We work in an organization that grows very fast but the amount of employees does not grow with the same amount. By giving the employees and managers a little more attention and to listen more to employees I think that the organization can achieve a lot more and people will get motivated to work harder." Employee, Location B

Relatedness

Relatedness is another factor line managers appointed when asking about what enhances their motivation in implementing HRM. When line managers feel related with the organization and with their team, this will enhance their intrinsic motivation to perform HRM. The interviewees suggest that line managers do feel related with the organization and their team. The way of managing the teams is very different. Location A and B are laboratories whereas at location C employees work to the utmost extend at home or in the field. The fact that most employees work from home or in the field comes with some challenges for managers.

"The atmosphere in the team is good. However, the advisors scarcely work together with other colleagues because they work a lot from home. I want them to work regularly here at the office to ensure connection inside the team. Especially in the beginning there were a lot of 'little islands' inside the team because everybody had his own clients. ... Since a half year there is more contact inside the team."

Manager, Location C

The managers at location C handle this challenge very well. The contact between the manager and employees is good, although this is mostly by telephone. In the laboratory the overall atmosphere between line managers

and employees is good. It is easier for line managers to create a bond between employees because they have more contact in the laboratory. However, the workload and recent changes within the organization have a major impact on the people and the atmosphere. Because of the huge growth of the company, there is a lot of work while the amount of employees is more or less the same. People need to work very hard because of the large amount of samples they need to analyze. Especially at location A, this results in a negative atmosphere in the laboratory sometimes. The line managers are aware of this negativity in the laboratory. However, they are still positive and feel related to the company which results in that they keep motivating their employees.

“The atmosphere in the laboratory is sometimes negative. Some employees are very negative about certain changes within the organization. There are a lot of changes implemented here at the laboratory and a lot of people find it difficult to adjust to that ... Because of these changes there is a lot of grumble and dissatisfaction with each other, however this is not towards the manager.” Employee, Location A

“My manager knows that the atmosphere is not always positive here in the laboratory. However, he keeps being positive. He motivates the team and stimulates employees to get the best out of themselves. I think that is good to see. He keeps being motivated in his work and he keeps motivating us as a team.”

Employee, Location A

The importance of line managers' motivation

Motivation seems to be important for line managers' effectiveness in implementing HRM. The respondents argued that it is hard to indicate the exact difference between managing responsibilities and HR responsibilities because HR is always a part of your job as a manager. When a manager is not interested in people management, than he or she is by definition not suitable for a management function. This proves that a line manager's motivation is important for their performance in implementing HRM. The following comments illustrate the importance of motivation in order to be effective as a manager:

“As a line manager it is very important to like managing people. When you like your HR responsibilities (to manage people), you will express that motivation to your employees. A manager needs to give employees the feeling that they are important and you cannot do that when you are not motivated yourself.”

Managing Director, Location B

“The company grows with 30% per year which means that managers need the energy and motivation to work always a bit harder because we grow so fast. Managers need to be motivated in their work and we select on that. I motivate managers by giving them attention and acknowledge their problems. It is important to give managers the feeling that they are not alone and that upper management and the HR department are there to help them.” HR-manager

Summarizing the findings about line managers' motivation

Motivation seems to have a relation with line managers' effectiveness in implementing HRM. The interviewees argued that because people management is the most important part of your job as a manager, line managers need to be motivated in implementing HRM. When the aim is to enhance line managers' motivation, it is preferable that they are intrinsically motivated to implement HRM. Line managers mentioned several factors to help sustaining this intrinsic motivation. Autonomy seems to be an important factor influencing line managers' motivation to effectively implement HRM. The line managers at all three locations have a lot of autonomy. As long as the operational goals are achieved, line managers are free in what to do and how to compose their team. Besides they need to feel competent to perform HR activities in order to keep being motivated. They also appointed that they need to feel appreciated by the organization in order to keep being motivated to perform HRM. When it comes to support, line managers appointed that in order to keep being motivated, they need support by means of easy to use systems and a clear overview of their HR responsibilities. In other words, their HR tasks should not cost unnecessary time. At last they need to feel related with the organization. When it comes to relatedness, the interviews show that line managers do feel related with the organization and their team. The overall atmosphere within the teams is good. However, due to the fact that there are a lot of changes within the organization, there is some dissatisfaction within the laboratories.

4.3 Opportunity

In this chapter it will be outlined what line managers perceive as important concepts concerning their opportunity to implement HRM. During the interviews line managers argued that they need help and support, clear policies and procedures, user friendly systems and enough time for carrying out their HR activities.

Help and support

Line managers get support not only from the HR department but also from the managing director at their location. Instead of asking HR professionals, line managers often contact the managing director first, and only contact the HR department when support from the managing director is not sufficient or the problem is too complex. It stands out that line managers contact different parties for different concerns. They often talk to other managers or the managing director about problems that their employees encounter or about how to handle certain day-to-day HR difficulties. Sometimes they also contact the managing director when they need help by the selection of new employees. The HR department is mostly contacted for legal issues or information about specific regulations or systems.

"The collaboration between me and the managers is so arranged that we have a one to one meeting once per two weeks. Besides there is a joint consultation with all the managers here at the location [MT] once per two weeks. In addition, I walk into their offices to look how it goes." Managing Director, Location A

"I support the managers when they ask for my help, so when they ask me about things they need my help for. Upon request I help them with a lot of things like how I would handle in certain situations."
Managing Director, Location C

"The collaboration between me and one of the managers is mainly coaching. The first questions regarding a lot of HR related things first come to me, while in the basic they can go to the HR department too ... I would like that the line managers go directly to the HR department with these kind of questions so that I do not have to be there in between. Mostly I do not have the knowledge about HR issues too, so than I still need to contact the HR department." Managing Director, Location B

At location B the managerial support is more coaching compared with the other locations. The HR department is not located at this location and the contact with the HR department is minimal. This might be the reason that managers expect more help from their managing director. Some line managers need content-related advice and coaching from their managing director on how to perform HR activities. The HR department is located at location A. This means that the contact with the HR department is more difficult for the other locations. Especially location B struggles with the fact that the HR department is not located and asking for help is hard.

"It would be nice to have somebody here at the location and not only on our request but actively talk to people in the lab. Now the link and contact is broken. Most people in the lab never had contact with the HR department. Maybe one person can be there one day per month to make sure that there is local presence of HR here at this location because the HR department looks at things from a different perspective than managers."
Manager, Location B

"For the managers at location A it is much easier to contact the HR department because they can walk in their office. We do not have that here. By telephone they are barely accessible and by e-mail we barely get response. This makes it very hard for us to contact the HR department." Managing Director, Location B

Line managers' opinions about the importance of an HR department at the location differs. Some managers argued that it is important to have the HR department at location in order to get the help and support they need, whereas other line managers argued that this is not necessary. Overall it can be said that as long as managers get the help and support they need, they do not need the HR department constantly at location. However, when managers have the feeling that the help and support they get is not sufficient, they argue that the HR department should be at location in order to help them. The following quotes illustrate this:

"I am convinced that the decentral HR function should be at the location regularly. In addition they have to take proactive initiative to be part of the organization. This means that the HR function needs to be more than just an office where you can ask questions. They have to fill in that role unsolicited. When people at the location know the person who is behind the HR role, it would be easier for them to have contact."

Managing Director, Location C

"When I have HR related questions I can ask them and I do not need the HR department at this location especially. Nowadays there are such good communication tools and the travel time from their location to our location here is very long. We can have contact though the telephone and we can share our screens on the computer with each other. For me that is enough. I do not need them here at the location in order to get the help and support I need." Manager, Location B

Time

In addition, line managers need adequate capacity in terms of time to get involved in HRM implementation. It stands out that all interviewed line managers see their HR tasks and responsibilities as part of their job. However, the constant operational and personal range of problems can result in a perception of overload in a line manager's HRM role. There is a high work pressure at the organization which results in that some managers have an overload of tasks and responsibilities. Managers argue that a lot of time is spent on administrative tasks like the approval of hours in the system, which has to be done every day. Some managers argued that the administrative tasks cost too much time because the systems are not easy to use.

"My HR tasks and responsibilities will be more likely when it would be a lot easier. Now I need to send an e-mail to the HR department when I want to look something up in a personnel file. They need to look that up for me, scan the documents in and then send it to me by e-mail. When I have my own system where I can enter information about my team, it would be a lot easier." Manager, Location C

"Systems like 'Verzuimsignaal' are worthless. This system is absolutely not user friendly and it costs a lot of time to enter information in that system. I would like that there will be taken care of by the HR department. This is also the case with the system for the approval of the hours employees have worked [Timewize]. These basic systems should be user friendly and unburden you as a manager and now they only cost extra time. I should spend this time on my team instead of figuring out how the system works." Manager, Location A

These quotes illustrate that not the HR responsibilities in general, but particularly the administrative tasks are things that cost a lot of time. The managers argued that when the administrative tasks would be removed or cost less time, their HR tasks would be easier and they would have a better opportunity to carry out their tasks.

Policies and procedures

Several line managers mentioned that it is not clear for which HR activities they are responsible and which HR tasks are the responsibilities of the HR department because their HR role is not structured and formalized. This proves that there is a lack of clarity about their HR responsibilities.

"There is no clear separation between my HR responsibilities as a manager, and the HR responsibilities of the HR department. The HR responsibilities are not written in a procedure, at least not that I know. Next week you have an interview with another manager here at this location, and it could be that he tells you something else about his HR responsibilities. Per manager this can be very different because there is no clear structure or procedure about which HR responsibilities we have as a manager." Manager, Location A

"That is the clarity I miss. There is no HR-policy which tells what responsibilities the HR department has and what part of HR do I as a manager need to take over. Based on earlier communications with the HR department we agreed about how to recruit new employees. There is no policy that makes clear the distinction between responsibilities from the HR department and the manager. However, not that I know of. It is hard to know which HR responsibilities I have because when I started this job I expected to have an HR introduction and an introduction about my responsibilities, but for me this is all learning on the job." Manager, Location B

Despite the fact that more managers mentioned that there is no clear separation between the HR responsibilities of line managers and those of the HR department, all line managers generally have the same HR responsibilities. However, for line managers at location B the focus is mainly on the operational tasks and they have more administrative HR tasks which they are responsible for.

"My manager has a lot of responsibilities because she has two roles. She is manager of the laboratory as well as our team leader. In her role as a team leader she is responsible for the quality of the analysis and the tasks on the workfloor. In her role as a manager she is also responsible for HR activities like applying appraisal and approval of the hours we worked. This means that she has a lot of responsibilities." Employee, Location B

It appears that a lack of policies and procedures will not necessarily lead to obstacles as perceived by line managers, when they are balanced by support from the HR department or their managing director. When line managers know that they will be provided with the help and support they need, the success in the execution of HR practices should not be harmed. Different line managers mentioned that they like the freedom they have in applying HR practices in accordance with their own interpretation and understanding.

"There is no clear HR policy with policies and procedures. However, I do not think that is very interesting because I do things based on experience and operational knowledge. I think it is important to get space when it comes to applying HR practices and I get that space here in the organization. Of course there are rules that I have to keep, but there is space to do things in the way I want and that is something I like about this organization." Manager, Location A

However, at the same time, some managers indicated that they need policies and procedures when it comes to implementing HRM because they do not know what is expected from them and how to execute some HR activities.

"In order to implement HRM, the procedures and policies are the most important thing I need right now because now there is no clear structure. Maybe for another manager that is different, but for me that is very important. Right now I do things on a certain way but the next time maybe I will do it in a different way because I do not know what to do." Manager, Location B

"I have the feeling that everybody has so much to do. On the one hand you need support but you don't want to disturb others with your problems because they are busy too. But on the other hand, you really need the support when you do not know what to do. I know that the HR department is working very hard and they are running into a lot of projects like implementing a new "Arbeidsvoorwaardenregeling". They are so busy. If we have clear procedures about how to do things, then we can take over tasks from each other because it is clear what to do and how to do. I feel at the moment that everybody has a lot to do. What we miss the most from the organization is a clear structure and procedures about how to handle." Manager, Location B

These statements make clear that a lack of policies and procedures is particularly experienced as challenging by those line managers that have little experience and not a lot of knowledge about HR processes. These managers need more support in terms of policies and procedures. Managers also recognize that differences in application of HR practices might result in different outcomes, which might be negative for the company because every manager will do things in their own way. Therefore they argued for some policies and procedures in order to standardize the execution of HR practices and thereby ensuring that HRM is implemented in a consistent way. Their HR roles should also be clearly defined and allocated such that role ambiguity is minimized. Line managers often lack a clear role definition and therefore their HR responsibilities will be unclear.

The importance of line managers' opportunity

The importance of line managers' opportunity appears from the following quotes:

"I think the ability to implement HRM is very important but if you do not get the opportunity to do so then you can be very smart but you will not be able to implement HRM effectively ... When there are no clear procedures and policies than I do not know what is expected from me exactly." Manager, Location B

"The most important factor at this moment is the presence of clear procedures and policies, because these are not present yet ... At the moment we have very high expectations from the managers but we do not provide them with the tools to live up to these expectations ... They have the ability and motivation but the organization needs to provide them with the opportunity and support, otherwise they will not be effective."

Managing Director, Location A

These quotes show that the opportunity to implement HRM seems to be a condition in order to be effective as a manager. Even if line managers have the ability and are motivated to perform HRM practices, it is of crucial importance that the organization must provide them with appropriate opportunities to implement HRM effectively.

The role of the HR department in assuring opportunity

The HR manager described the role and position of the HR department as steering. This means that the HR department is not only doing what the director or managers want, but they add value. This is one of the core values of the HR department. The HR department needs to make a difference and contribute things that directors and managers cannot do. There are approximately 550 employees in the Food and Feed division. For the HR-manager it is not possible to serve all those employees. That is why the HR responsibility is primarily by the line managers. They are the ones responsible for their team. The roadmap is the most important way for the HR department to be proactive on strategic level. This HR roadmap is constructed by the HR department in consultation with the team of directors. The priorities when it comes to HR are on this roadmap. All the tasks on the HR roadmap have the goal to support line managers and give them the opportunity to do their job as good as possible. The organization grows very fast which results in that a lot of activities got settled to a later point. However, by introducing the HR roadmap, the HR department tries to be proactive on strategic level.

Summarizing the findings about line managers' opportunity

All interviewees argue that line managers need the opportunity to implement HRM. Even if line managers have the ability and are motivated to perform HRM practices effectively, the organization must provide them with appropriate opportunities to use their skills. Line managers mentioned opportunities like help and support, clear policies and procedures, user friendly systems and enough time for carrying out their HR activities. These opportunity factors seem to be a condition in order to be effective as a line manager. The HR roadmap is leading for the HR department to unburden the line managers and to support them in their job as a manager.

4.4 Relationship between the AMO factors

In this chapter it will be outlined in what way a line manager's ability, motivation, and opportunity seem to be related to each other. It seems that line managers' performance in implementing HRM is affected by both their ability and motivation and that these factors interact with each other. Line managers argue that when they do not have the ability to perform well, they will probably be less motivated because they may feel that performing is too difficult for them or that they have a low likelihood of success. The following quotes illustrate this:

"Motivation and knowledge interact with each other. When you have the experience and knowledge to implement changes within an organization and you see that this is effective, you will get extra motivated. However, when it is the other way around and a manager does not have the experience and knowledge which results in that changes are poorly implemented, the manager will not get motivated. So a line manager's ability and motivation are self-enhancing factors." Manager, Location A

"When a manager is motivated, he or she will gain more knowledge because that person thinks it is interesting and wants to know more about it. When you like doing something, you are more easily prepared to learn new things and to get into that." Manager, Location C

When asking line managers what they perceive as important factors sustaining their intrinsic motivation to implement HRM, they mentioned that they need to feel competent in performing HR activities. The interviewees argued that when line managers feel that they are competent to perform certain HR activities, they will be more motivated to perform HRM. Therefore it seems that ability and motivation interact with each other.

Even if line managers have the ability and are motivated to perform HRM practices effectively, organizations must provide them with appropriate opportunities to use their skills. Organizational support like help from HR professionals as well as managerial support, clear policies and procedures, user friendly systems and sufficient time to carry out HR responsibilities are concepts related to accessing the opportunity to perform well. The majority of managers stated that there is an outdated 'intranet' where HR policies are eventually accessible. They are not getting the support they want from the HR department. Not providing managers with the opportunity to implement HRM could also affect their motivation to implement HRM. The following quotes illustrate this:

"Sometimes my manager needs to call and e-mail the HR department a lot of times before things gets done. On a certain moment you do not have the motivation to keep trying. When the manager is not provided with help and support from the HR department on time, there is no trust between the manager and the HR department. This results in that a manager will become less motivated to get things done."

Employee, Location B

"Managers would like their HR tasks more when their tasks would be made easier. They are not trained to be HR professionals thus some of them think it is hard to implement HRM. But now that they have certain HR responsibilities, they need to be provided with tools and resources to implement HRM. When they do not have the opportunity because they do not have enough time or there are no clear procedures, they will not be motivated." Managing Director, Location A

The previous comments highlight how a lack of opportunity can negatively impact a line manager's motivation to carry out HR tasks. Despite having the ability and motivation, line managers might still perform poor when they do not get the opportunities to implement HRM effectively. And when they are not provided with the tools and resources they need, their motivation might decrease. Besides having an effect on line managers' motivation, opportunity also seems to be related with line managers' ability to implement HRM. Line managers who are provided with policies and procedures for example, will implement HR practices more effectively than line managers who are not provided with any policies and procedures. The following quote illustrates this:

"It would be nice if there were some more policies and procedures when it comes to HR. Managers can use these policies when they do not know what or how to do certain things. Especially when I was new here it was hard because I did not know how to handle when an employee was sick for example. Eventually you learn what to do in certain situations, but in this organization you really need to figure that out for yourself. It would be nice if that information was captured somewhere." Manager, Location C

It appears that when line managers are provided with the organizational support they need, they are better able to implement HRM. Therefore opportunity seems to be related with line managers' ability to implement HRM.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to find out in what way the AMO factors are (inter)related with line managers' HRM implementation effectiveness. Many researchers argue that line managers possess operational knowledge and are selected based on their functional knowledge. They argue that such ability often comes by moving through ranks which results in an employee with developed technical capabilities and role knowledge promoted to a position of associated managerial responsibilities without development of their managerial abilities. However, the results show that managers and executives are often selected based on their managerial knowledge and that sometimes it is not assessed whether they have relevant work experience and functional knowledge about the processes in the laboratory. The respondents in this research argued that managers need to know the processes at the laboratory, but only to a certain extent because operational tasks are the responsibility of the employees and the manager only facilitates the team. This shows that the teams are to a certain extent self-managing and line managers facilitate the employees.

After this study it can be concluded that line managers need certain abilities in order to implement HRM. Line managers argued that they need to have knowledge about operational processes in the laboratory as well as knowledge about HR related processes. Besides, leadership skills like conversational skills and knowledge of human nature seem to be important in order to be an effective manager. It is important to note that not only their experience, knowledge and skills (human capital) is important for their effectiveness in implementing HRM. Social relationships and networking between line managers seems to have an important influence on the development of human capital and intellectual capital. This shows that a line manager's human capital is not an isolated concept but this is influenced by social capital like networking relationships and trust between managers. Institutionalized knowledge like manuals and guidelines (organizational capital) are also important for the development of human capital. This means that there are some interrelationships between the constructs influencing line managers' ability. Social capital and organizational capital both seem to influence human capital. Like Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) and Kellner et al. (2016), this study suggests that line managers' ability seems to influence line managers' HRM implementation effectiveness. Without the necessary knowledge and skills, line managers are not able to implement HRM policies in an effective way, even if they are motivated and have the right opportunity to do so.

Motivation also seems to be an important factor influencing line managers' HRM implementation effectiveness. It seems that motivation needs to be present in order to be a good manager. Because line managers mentioned that people management is the most important part of their job as a manager, they need to be motivated in implementing HRM. The type of rewards seems to be less important for line managers' motivation because when it comes to institutional incentives, line managers are mostly evaluated on achieving targets related to profits or sales and not in areas related to managing people. However, it appears that they do take people management seriously and argue that their team is their most important asset. This shows that not rewards but the task itself is the basis of their motivation. The interviews show that in order to be motivated; line managers need to feel competent in performing HRM. This proves that there is some overlap when it comes to competences. The operationalization of intellectual capital theory shows that competences are part of line managers' ability, whereas the interviewees argue that their competences also influence their motivation to implement HRM.

According to the organizational support theory, line managers' perception that the organization cares about their well-being, their perception that the organization provides them with help and support and the perception that the organization values their contribution are important concepts of their opportunity to implement HRM (Eisenberger, Huntington & Sowa, 1986; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2016). However, during the interviews respondents argued that when it comes to their opportunity to implement HR practices, they particularly need help and support from the HR department as well as upper management, clear policies and procedures, systems that are easy to use and enough time to carry out their HR tasks. These results indicate that the opportunity factors found by Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) are the ones that managers particularly appointed in order to have the opportunity to implement HRM.

Practical implications

This research offers insight for the HR department interested in enhancing the performance of line managers in implementing HRM since they are the ones responsible for executing HR practices. Since ability seems to have an influence on line managers' HRM implementation effectiveness, HR professionals have an important role in improving line managers' knowledge, skills, capabilities and social networks of line managers who need to perform HRM practices. The task of the HR department is therefore to assure a certain level of line managers' ability in implementing HRM. They have to facilitate line managers and make them better in what they do. This

can be done in different ways: training and development of managers and selecting managers based on their level of knowledge. A manager's knowledge and skills can be developed through management training by one specific institution which results in that there is one leadership culture throughout the organization. Besides, the HR-manager could have periodic consultations with important stakeholders to discuss the challenges when it comes to people management on a structural basis. Another way to ensure a certain knowledge level is to set requirements for a particular management function. This means that the front is selected on having a certain level of knowledge and skills. Thus, by setting specific requirements for a particular management function and thereafter offer line managers management trainings on a structural basis will help to ensure a certain minimum knowledge level. Besides it is important to discuss things when they are not working out well. Besides, the HR department could provide a platform for line managers to share experiences and help each other. For example, difficulties related to management and their leading role could be discussed during meetings with managers from different departments in consultation with the HR manager.

Poor HRM ability may reduce line managers' motivation to perform HRM. That is why there should be mainly focused upon the development of line managers' HR abilities. It is also important that line managers are motivated to implement HRM. By the recruitment and selection of new line managers it is important to look at their motivation. Line managers need to have energy and a certain drive to be concerned with people management, otherwise they would not be effective. On the other hand, it is important to keep the current managers motivated. This could be done by giving them a lot of autonomy because autonomous motivation facilitates a line manager's effective performance and well-being. Autonomy enhances their intrinsic motivation which leads to line managers become more interested, excited and confident in implementing HRM. Besides line managers should feel related to their team and the organization. Therefore the HR department should also focus on the appreciation and involvement of line managers.

The effect of opportunities provided by the HRM department in terms of help and support from the HR department and upper management, clear policies and procedures, clear systems and enough time to carry out the HR tasks should not be underestimated. HR professionals should provide line managers with clear and adequate policies and procedures, especially when line managers do not have much experience and little knowledge. At the same time, these policies and procedures should avoid restricting line managers in their responsibilities as they might do only HR tasks that are written down in their job description. The most important suggestion is that HR professionals should ensure that line managers understand their HRM role and know what is expected of them, and how this related to the role and position of the HRM department. Clarity of their HR role and a clear understanding about the mutual responsibilities and expectations may help line managers to be successful HRM implementers. This clarity can be given by introducing policies and procedures in order to make line managers' HR role clear.

Theoretical implications

This study focuses on the relationship between line manager's ability, motivation, and opportunity, and their performance in implementing HRM. Insights from the interviews, combined with insights from the literature, provide evidence that may help to develop a model to understand how the AMO factors influence line managers' HRM implementation effectiveness. Resources of the intellectual capital theory, self-determination theory and organizational support theory were used to operationalize the AMO factors in order to explain the relationship with each of the AMO factors and line managers' HRM implementation effectiveness. The concept of intellectual capital is considered as a key determinant in the process of value creation for shareholders, managers, and the society as a whole (Viedma, 2007). Intellectual capital can therefore be defined as the knowledge and other intangibles that produce or create value in the present and in the future. Because intellectual capital is the key source of wealth creation, organizations pay close attention to the effective management of such capital and this theory is used to operationalize line managers' ability in implementing HRM. However, the intellectual capital theory does not take proper account of other non-intellectual intangibles, such as organizational culture, motivation and employee commitment. That is the reason why the self-determination theory and perceived organizational support theory are also used in this research. The self-determination theory is a macro theory of human motivation that provides a framework of understanding and enhancing people's motivation. According to this theory, autonomy, competence and relatedness are cross-culturally universal psychological needs that when nurtured by the social context, promote motivated behaviour. The theory about perceived organizational support is used to describe the degree to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being and reciprocate with better performance. These theories turned out to be helpful for the operationalization of the AMO factors. However, it seems that there is some overlap between the concepts influencing the AMO factors. During the interviews it appeared that some concepts were influencing different AMO factors at the same

time. As mentioned before, competences seem to influence line managers' ability as well as their motivation. In figure 8 till 10 the relationships between the concepts influencing the different AMO factors are shown.

The interviews show that the organizational support theory operationalizes line managers' opportunity differently than line managers did. Line managers argued that when it comes to their opportunities to implement HR practices, they particularly need help and support of the HR department, managerial support, clear policies and procedures, systems that are easy to use and enough time to carry out their HR tasks. These results indicate that the opportunity factors found by Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) are the ones that managers particularly appointed in order to have the opportunity to implement HRM. The theory about organizational support focuses on the importance of line managers' perception that the organization cares about their well-being and their contribution whereas line managers themselves did not mention this as important concepts of their opportunity in implementing HRM. The intellectual capital theory appeared to be very suitable for this study. The operationalization according to this theory appeared to be in accordance with the results of the interviews. The self-determination theory focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This theory turned out to be very helpful because it points out different types of motivation. The underlying idea is that the type of motivation is more important than the total amount of motivation for predicting outcomes such as effective performance. The respondents mentioned different concepts influencing their intrinsic motivation in order to implement HRM.

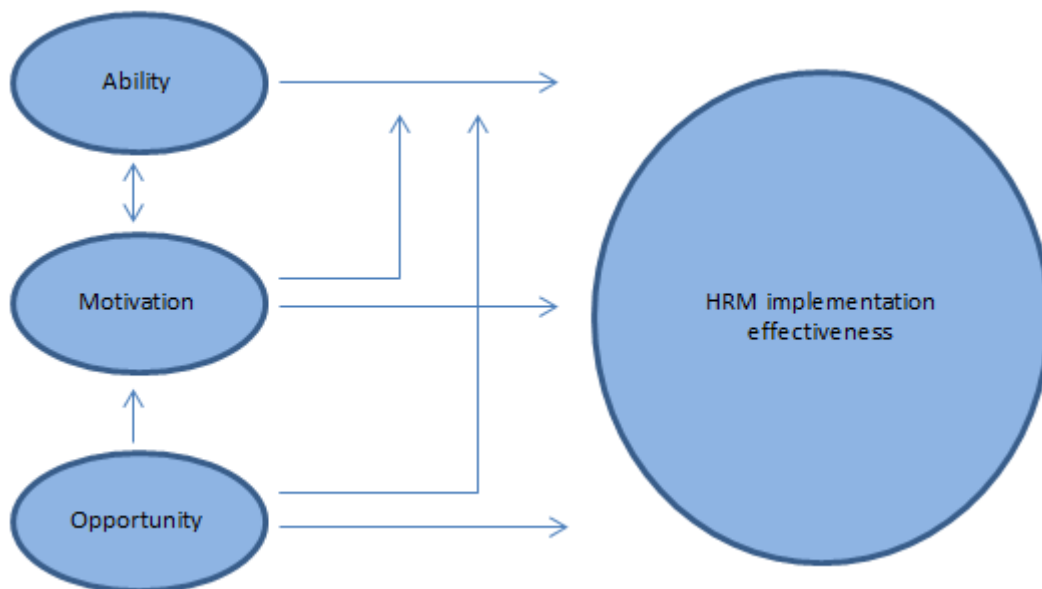


Figure 7: Revised model of AMO and line manager's performance

Like Bos-Nehles et al. and Kellner et al. (2016), the results of this study also show that ability seems to influence line managers' HRM implementation effectiveness. Without the necessary experience, knowledge and skills line managers will not be able to implement HR practices effectively, even if they are very motivated and have the opportunity to do so. The interviews show that it could be considered that motivation is a hygiene factor that needs to be present in order to be a good manager. When line managers are not motivated, their effectiveness will be lower. The job characteristics model, designed by Hackman and Oldham (1976) argues that the most effective means of motivating individuals is through the optimal design of jobs. The interviews showed that the type of rewards line managers get seems to be less important for their motivation. Line managers are mostly evaluated on achieving targets related to profits or sales and not in areas related to managing people. However, they do take people management seriously and argue that their team is their most important asset. This proves that not rewards but the task itself is the basis of their motivation. When line managers are responsible, have knowledge about the outcomes and think that their work is meaningful, they are motivated to perform certain HR tasks. Motivation also seems to influence the relationship between ability and HRM implementation effectiveness. This model claims that motivation and ability could be self-enhancing factors. A line manager's ability can influence its motivation and this relationship can be reversed. The interviews showed that in some cases poor motivation may reduce the desire to participate in learning and development and to further develop their HR ability. Conversely, line managers with a high motivation in implementing HRM seem to be more interested in developing their HR ability. The model also suggests that it seems that opportunity could interact with motivation. A lack of opportunity can negatively impact a line

manager's motivation to carry out HR tasks. Opportunity also seems to influence the relationship between ability and performance. The opportunity to implement HRM can be seen as a condition to be effective as a manager. Even if line managers have the ability and are motivated to perform HRM practices, line managers argue that it is of crucial importance that the organization provides them with appropriate opportunities to implement HRM effectively. That is the reason why opportunity also seems to have an influence on HRM implementation effectiveness.

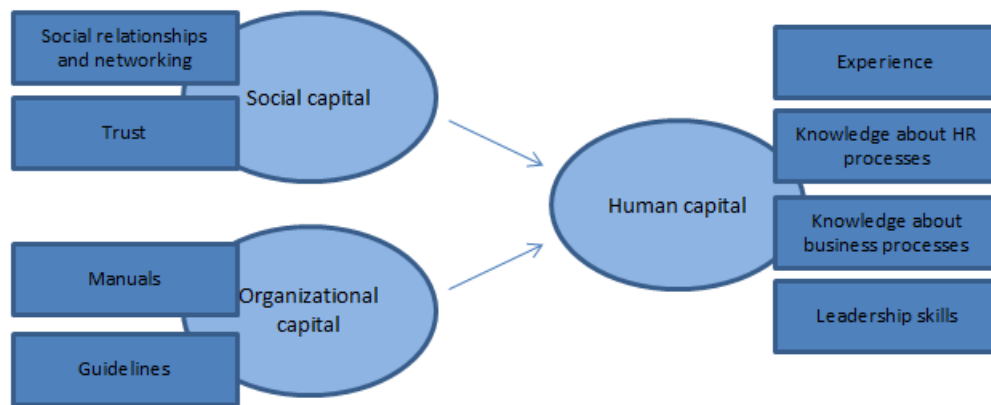


Figure 8: Relationships between constructs influencing line managers' ability

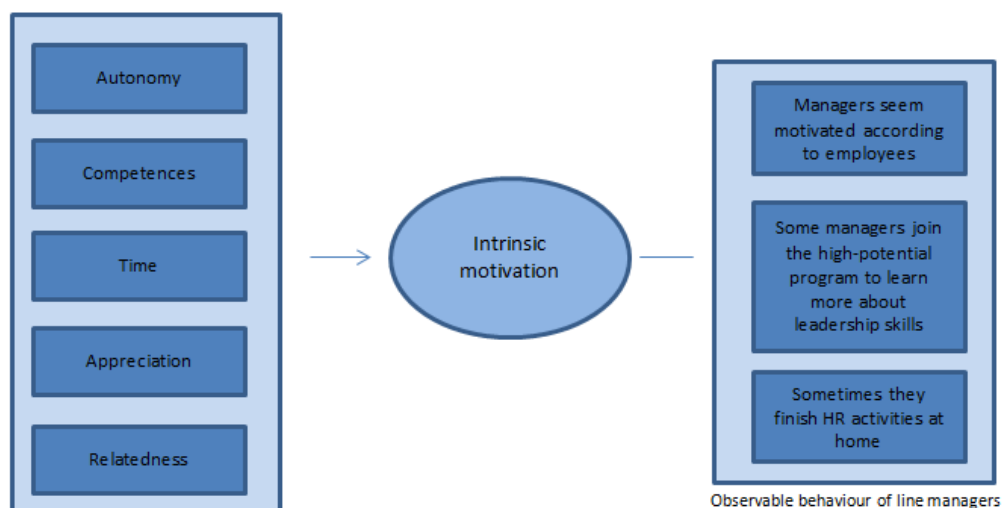


Figure 9: Factors influencing line managers' motivation and their observable (motivational) behaviour

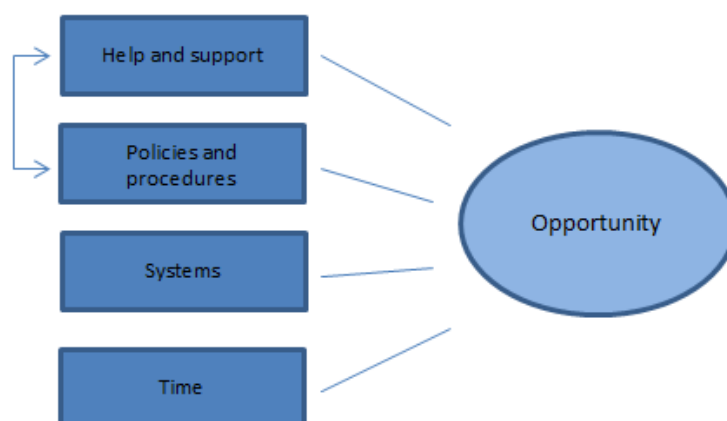


Figure 10: Concepts of line managers' opportunity

6. Conclusion and limitations

This case study offers valuable insights in what line managers need to effectively implement HRM. To do so it describes the factors that hinder them in performing their HR responsibilities. There have been other studies carried out with the intention of identify the role of line managers' ability, motivation and opportunity in implementing HRM. However, these studies have found different outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to explain the role of line managers' ability, motivation, and opportunity in their implementation effectiveness based on a theoretically-based operationalization of the AMO factors. With the help of an extended theoretical framework to prepare the right interview questions for the qualitative research, valuable insights have been found.

The main limitation of this study is the fact that the data is gathered from one organization because this limits the generalizability. The organizational context has a strong effect on the results. The organization under study is growing about 30% per year which means that there are constant changes when it comes to HR responsibilities and operational tasks. There is no strong fundamental basis when it comes to HR policies and procedures. A lot of things are done in a way that managers themselves think is good. That is why some managers argue that they need more support and opportunities to implement HRM. This is something that needs to be taken into account. In other companies this can be different.

Case studies and, in particular, the use of interviews based on perceptions presents some drawbacks. Asking line managers what they perceive as important factors in order to implement HRM effectively and how they perceive their own ability and motivation may result in biased answers because of social desirability. The responses given by the interviewees are hard to judge because they are asked about their own capabilities, competencies and motivation. To avoid this limitation, employees and the managing director were also asked about the line manager's capabilities, motivation and opportunity. Thus although the qualitative nature of this case study shows some limitations, it provides us with a valuable insight into what line managers perceive when reflecting on their HR role.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Interview questions line managers

1. Kunt u zichzelf voorstellen?
 - *Naam*
 - *Functie*
 - *Hoe lang in dienst?*
2. Hoe ziet een gemiddelde werkdag er uit?
3. Hoe ziet uw team eruit?
 - *Grootte van het team. Aan hoeveel personen geeft de lijnmanager leiding?*
 - *Wat zijn verantwoordelijkheden van het team?*
 - *Hoe is de sfeer/betrokkenheid in het team? = relatedness*
4. Wat is uw rol binnen het team?
 - *Taken en verantwoordelijkheden*
 - *Waarom geeft de lijnmanager leiding? = motivatie*

Implementatie HRM

5. Welke HR-verantwoordelijkheden heeft u?
 - *Voor welke HR-gerelateerde zaken wordt de lijnmanager verantwoordelijk gehouden?*
6. Kunt u een aantal voorbeelden noemen van situaties waarin u te maken krijgt met het implementeren van het HR-beleid?
 - *Voor welke HR-gerelateerde zaken wordt de lijnmanager verantwoordelijk gehouden?*
 - *Hoe is het voor de lijnmanager duidelijk welke verantwoordelijkheden hij of zij heeft als het gaat om het implementeren het HR-beleid? Wat zijn daarover de afspraken?*
 - *Welke HR-gerelateerde zaken zijn de verantwoordelijkheid van de HR afdeling?*
7. Kunt u beschrijven hoe het proces verloopt als er een nieuwe medewerker wordt aangenomen?
 - *Hoe is de samenwerking tussen de lijnmanager en de HR afdeling en andere managers?*
 - *Welke verantwoordelijkheden heeft de lijnmanager?*
 - *Over welke HR-gerelateerde zaken moet de lijnmanager dingen afstemmen met de HR afdeling en andere managers?*
 - *Hoe worden beslissingen genomen?*
8. Wat hebt u nodig om het HR-beleid op een goede manier te kunnen implementeren?
 - *Eerst breed en open vragen, daarna doorvragen.*
 - *Wat heeft de lijnmanager nodig van zichzelf? (kennis en motivatie)*
 - *Wat heeft de lijnmanager nodig van collega's en organisatie? (mogelijkheden)*
 - *Ook andere factoren*

Kennis

9. Over welke kennis en vaardigheden moet een lijnmanager volgens u beschikken om HR-taken effectief te kunnen uitvoeren?
 - *Waarom juist deze vaardigheden?*
10. Wat zijn uw sterke punten als het gaat om het effectief uitvoeren van HR-taken?
 - *Waaruit blijkt dit?*

11. Hoe hebt u deze kennis en vaardigheden verkregen?
 - *Heeft de lijnmanager deze kennis opgedaan tijdens zijn huidige functie of tijdens eerdere functies en/of opleidingen?*
 - *Wat doet de organisatie om ervoor te zorgen dat de lijnmanagers over voldoende kennis en vaardigheden beschikken? (trainingen o.i.d.)*
 - *Zijn er bepaalde databases of systemen waarin informatie staat opgeslagen voor lijnmanagers?*
12. Op welk gebied zou u zich nog verder willen ontwikkelen?
 - *Wat zou de organisatie kunnen doen om de kennis en vaardigheden van de lijnmanager te kunnen vergroten?*
13. Op welke manier zouden uw kennis en vaardigheden vergroot kunnen worden om HR-taken effectief te implementeren?
14. Hoe belangrijk zijn uw kennis en vaardigheden als het gaat om het implementeren van HRM?

Motivatie en mogelijkheid

15. Kunt u wat vertellen over de combinatie tussen uw verantwoordelijkheden als leidinggevende en uw operationele verantwoordelijkheden?
16. Wat motiveert u om HR-taken effectief te implementeren?
 - *Waarom?*
17. Wat vindt u leuk/minder leuk aan het implementeren van HR-taken?
 - *Vindt de lijnmanager de leidinggevende taken over het algemeen leuk?*
 - *In hoeverre is de lijnmanager gemotiveerd om, naast zijn of haar operationele taken, ook leidinggevende taken te vervullen*
18. Hoe belangrijk is uw motivatie als het gaat om het implementeren van HRM?
19. Wat zou u helpen uw leidinggevende taken (nog) leuker te gaan vinden?

Denk hierbij aan:

 - *Meer kennis en leidinggevende vaardigheden*
 - *Meer tijd voor HR-gerelateerde zaken*
 - *Meer autonomie in het maken van beslissingen*
 - *Meer betrokkenheid bij de organisatie*
20. Hoe ervaart u de ondersteuning die u krijgt vanuit de organisatie om HR-taken effectief te implementeren?
21. Hoe ervaart u de ondersteuning die u krijgt vanuit de organisatie om uw verantwoordelijkheden te combineren?
 - *In hoeverre krijgt de lijnmanager ondersteuning van de HR afdeling en het management?*
 - *Wie is het aanspreekpunt als de lijnmanager vragen heeft?*
 - *Krijgt de lijnmanager voldoende tijd voor de leidinggevende verantwoordelijkheden?*
 - *Wat gebeurt er als de lijnmanager hulp nodig heeft bij bepaalde zaken? Door bijvoorbeeld kennis tekort of tijdtekort? = opportunity*
22. Hoe belangrijk is de ondersteuning die u krijgt vanuit de organisatie als het gaat om het implementeren van HRM?
23. Op welke manier zou de organisatie betere mogelijkheden voor u kunnen creëren om leiding te geven?

Denk hierbij aan:

 - *Meer tijd geven voor leidinggevende verantwoordelijkheden*
 - *Meer ondersteuning vanuit de organisatie aan lijnmanagers*
 - *Meer waardering voor lijnmanagers*
 - *Meer belang hechten aan welzijn van lijnmanagers*

24. Kunt u voorbeelden geven van andere factoren die u zouden kunnen helpen om een betere balans te vinden tussen uw leidinggevende en operationele verantwoordelijkheden?

Samenhang AMO factoren

We hebben allerlei factoren besproken die voor u belangrijk zijn om goed leiding te kunnen geven zoals ...

25. Hoe hangen deze factoren samen?
- *Waarom?*
26. Kunt u vertellen wat voor u het belangrijkste is om goed leiding te kunnen geven?
- *Waarom is dit het belangrijkste?*
27. Wat is de volgorde tussen deze factoren als het gaat om het effectief implementeren van het HR-beleid?
- *Volgorde van AMO factoren en andere factoren*

Dat waren de vragen. Heel erg bedankt voor uw tijd. Mocht ik nog tegen onduidelijkheden aanlopen, zou ik dan nog contact met u mogen opnemen?

- *Telefoonnummer en/of e-mailadres noteren.*

Appendix II: Interview questions employees

1. Kunt u zichzelf voorstellen?
 - *Naam*
 - *Functie*
 - *Hoe lang in dienst?*
2. Hoe ziet een gemiddelde werkdag er uit?
3. Hoe ziet uw team eruit?
 - *Grootte van het team*
 - *Wat zijn verantwoordelijkheden van het team?*
 - *Hoe is de sfeer/betrokkenheid in het team?*
4. Wat is uw rol in het team?
 - *Taken en verantwoordelijkheden*
5. Kunt u wat vertellen over de verantwoordelijkheden van uw lijnmanager?
 - *Waarvoor is de lijnmanager verantwoordelijk?*
 - *Welke operationele zaken en welke leidinggevende zaken?*
6. Kunt u beschrijven hoe het proces verloopt als u HR-gerelateerde vragen heeft? (denk aan bijvoorbeeld salaris, promotie, training)
 - *Wie benadert de werknemer voor HR-gerelateerde vragen?*
 - *Als de lijnmanager niet kan helpen bij bepaalde HR-gerelateerde zaken, wat gebeurt er dan?*
 - *Hoe is de ondersteuning van de HR-afdeling en het management?*

Implementatie HRM

7. Welke HR-verantwoordelijkheden heeft de lijnmanager?
8. Kunt u een aantal voorbeelden noemen van situaties waarin uw leidinggevende zich bezighoudt met de uitvoering van het HR-beleid?
9. Hoe ervaart u de HR-rol van uw leidinggevende?
 - *Waarom?*

Kennis

10. Over welke kennis en vaardigheden moet een lijnmanager volgens u beschikken om goed leiding te kunnen geven?
 - *Waarom juist deze vaardigheden?*
 - *Zijn deze antwoorden anders als het om de effectieve uitvoering van het HR-beleid gaat?*
11. Wat zijn de sterke punten van uw lijnmanager als het gaat om leiding geven?
 - *Waaruit blijkt dit?*
 - *Zijn deze antwoorden anders als het om de effectieve uitvoering van het HR-beleid gaat?*
12. Op welk gebied zou hij of zij zich nog verder kunnen ontwikkelen?
 - *Waaruit blijkt dit?*

Motivatie en mogelijkheid

13. Hoe leuk vindt uw lijnmanager het om leiding te geven?
 - *Waaruit blijkt dit?*
 - *Wat vindt de lijnmanager wel en niet leuk aan leiding geven?*
14. Hoe leuk vindt u lijnmanager het om HR-taken uit te voeren?
 - *Waaruit blijkt dit?*
 - *Wat vindt de lijnmanager wel en niet leuk aan de HR-taken?*
15. Wat zou naar uw mening de motivatie van de lijnmanager kunnen verhogen om HR-taken effectief uit te voeren?
 - *Waarom?*
 - *Denk aan:*
 - *Meer kennis en leidinggevende vaardigheden*
 - *Meer tijd voor HR-gerelateerde zaken*
 - *Meer autonomie in het maken van beslissingen*
 - *Meer betrokkenheid bij de organisatie*
16. Op welke manier kan de organisatie betere mogelijkheden voor lijnmanagers creëren om HR-taken effectief uit te voeren?
 - *Denk aan:*
 - *Meer tijd geven voor leidinggevende verantwoordelijkheden*
 - *Meer ondersteuning vanuit de organisatie aan lijnmanagers*
 - *Meer waardering voor lijnmanagers*
 - *Meer belang hechten aan welzijn van lijnmanagers*
17. Op welke manier zou de organisatie uw leidinggevende kunnen ondersteunen/helpen om HR-taken effectief uit te voeren?
18. Zijn er andere factoren waarvan u denkt dat dit lijnmanagers zou kunnen helpen een betere balans te vinden tussen zijn of haar leidinggevende en operationele verantwoordelijkheden?

Dat waren de vragen. Heel erg bedankt voor uw tijd. Mocht ik nog tegen onduidelijkheden aanlopen, zou ik dan nog contact met u mogen opnemen?

- *Telefoonnummer en/of e-mailadres noteren*

Appendix III: Interview questions managing director (and HR manager)

1. Kunt u zichzelf voorstellen?
 - *Naam*
 - *Verantwoordelijkheden*
 - *Hoe lang in dienst?*
2. Hoe ziet een gemiddelde werkdag er uit?

3. Hoe ziet uw team eruit?
 - *Grootte van de organisatie*
 - *Aan hoeveel personen geeft de HR-manager leiding?*
 - *Hoeveel lijnmanagers zijn er?*

Implementatie HRM

4. Voor welke HR-taken is de lijnmanager verantwoordelijk?
 - *Voor welke HR-gerelateerde zaken wordt de lijnmanager verantwoordelijk gehouden?*
 - *Hoe is het voor de lijnmanager duidelijk welke verantwoordelijkheden hij of zij heeft als het gaat om het implementeren het HR-beleid? Wat zijn daarover de afspraken? = beleid*
 - *Welke HR-gerelateerde zaken zijn de verantwoordelijkheid van de HR afdeling?*
5. Hoe werkt u met de lijnmanager aan deze taken samen?
6. Kunt u beschrijven hoe het proces verloopt als er een nieuwe medewerker wordt aangenomen?
 - *Hoe is de samenwerking tussen de lijnmanager en de HR afdeling en andere managers?*
 - *Welke verantwoordelijkheden heeft de lijnmanager?*
 - *Over welke HR-gerelateerde zaken moet de lijnmanager dingen afstemmen met de HR afdeling en andere managers?*
 - *Hoe worden beslissingen genomen?*
7. Wat hebben lijnmanagers volgens u nodig om het HR-beleid goed te kunnen implementeren?
 - *Waarom?*
 - *Eerst breed en open vragen, daarna doorvragen.*
 - *Wat heeft de lijnmanager nodig van zichzelf? (kennis en motivatie)*
 - *Wat heeft de lijnmanager nodig van collega's en organisatie? (mogelijkheden)*
 - *Ook andere factoren*

Kennis

8. Over welke kennis en vaardigheden moet een lijnmanager volgens u beschikken om goed leiding te kunnen geven?
 - *Waarom juist deze vaardigheden?*
 - *Op welke manier worden de kennis en vaardigheden van lijnmanagers beoordeeld?*
9. Wat vindt u van de huidige kennis en vaardigheden van de lijnmanagers om leiding te kunnen geven?
10. Wat doet de organisatie om lijnmanagers zo goed mogelijk voor te bereiden op hun HR-rol?
 - *Denk aan trainingen e.d.*
 - *Leert een lijnmanager deze kennis en vaardigheden voornamelijk tijdens zijn functie of al tijdens eerdere functies en/of opleidingen?*
 - *Zijn er bepaalde databases of systemen waarin informatie staat opgeslagen voor lijnmanagers?*

Motivatie en mogelijkheid

11. Kunt u wat vertellen over de combinatie tussen de verantwoordelijkheden als leidinggevende en de operationele verantwoordelijkheden voor lijnmanagers?
12. Hoe gemotiveerd zijn lijnmanagers om leiding te geven aan hun team?
 - *Vinden de lijnmanagers leiding geven leuk?*
 - *Hoe belangrijk is het dat de lijnmanagers hun leidinggevende taken leuk vinden? = motivatie*
13. Op welke manier denkt u dat lijnmanagers het leuker zouden gaan vinden om leiding te geven?

Denk hierbij aan:

 - *Meer kennis en leidinggevende vaardigheden*
 - *Meer tijd voor HR-gerelateerde zaken*
 - *Meer autonomie in het maken van beslissingen*
 - *Meer betrokkenheid bij de organisatie*

14. Kunt u wat vertellen over de ondersteuning die de organisatie biedt aan lijnmanagers om hun leidinggevende en operationele verantwoordelijkheden te combineren?
- *Wie is het aanspreekpunt als de lijnmanager vragen heeft?*
 - *Wat gebeurt er als de lijnmanager hulp nodig heeft bij bepaalde zaken? Door bijvoorbeeld kennis tekort of tijdtekort?*
 - *Op welke manier wordt bepaald hoeveel tijd een lijnmanager krijgt voor zijn of haar leidinggevende verantwoordelijkheden?*
 - *In hoeverre wordt de lijnmanager ondersteund door de HR afdeling en het management? = opportunity*
15. Op welke manier zou uw organisatie betere mogelijkheden kunnen creëren voor lijnmanagers om leiding te geven?
- Denk hierbij aan:*
- *Meer tijd geven voor leidinggevende verantwoordelijkheden*
 - *Meer ondersteuning vanuit de organisatie aan lijnmanagers*
 - *Meer waardering voor lijnmanagers*
 - *Meer belang hechten aan welzijn van lijnmanagers*
16. Zijn er andere factoren die lijnmanagers zouden kunnen helpen een betere balans te vinden tussen hun leidinggevende en operationele verantwoordelijkheden?

Dat waren de vragen. Heel erg bedankt voor uw tijd. Mocht ik nog tegen onduidelijkheden aanlopen, zou ik dan nog contact met u mogen opnemen?

- *Telefoonnummer en/of e-mailadres noteren*